SUPERMAN™
Space Age

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SUPERMAN
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SUPERMAN: SPACE AGE

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ALL RED

1985.

Something my father Jor-El once told me...

That it is better to live with purpose and die by accident...

...than to live by accident and die without purpose.

There's no point, he said, in wasting your life clawing for money or fame or approval. In living a life that wasn't meant for you.

Because when **the end** finally comes...

KA-DOOM

...all of that--everything you've ever considered an accomplishment--is ***stripped away...***

...and all you have left is who you were.

Existence was always so fragile. Every minute a miracle.

GOOD-BYE, MY FRIENDS.

FFFF

Even though the end comes for us all, it is possible, just for a ***moment,*** to stick your head above the water like a man lost at sea, if only to shout...

HAVE I EVER TOLD YOU HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU?

EVERY DAY.

GOOD.

DAD? EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE ***OKAY,*** RIGHT?

NO, JONATHAN... ***IT'S NOT.***

...*"I was here."*

**RRRR

SMALLVILLE, KANSAS. NOVEMBER...

1963.

My **other** father didn't run a world. He ran a farm.

YOU GOT THE ***COVER STORY,*** CLARK! NOT BAD!

IT'S JUST A SCHOOL PAPER, DAD.

LLVILLE CROW

ANSAS FARMER GROWS ORLD'S LARGEST ONION

ONION CAUSES TEARS OF JOY

And to my frustrated teenage mind, he ***thought*** like a farmer.

Meaning...

...that he thought that you should start small.

STILL. YOU SHOULD BE ***PROUD,*** CLARK.

NOW COME HELP ME WITH THE HAY.

And ***stay*** that way.

THAT'S ENOUGH FOR TODAY. I'M SPENT.

That the outside world was something to be avoided.

I COULD HAVE THE REST ***DONE*** BEFORE YOU GOT TO THE PORCH, YOU KNOW.

DONE ***QUICK,*** OR DONE ***RIGHT?***

ROOT BEER?

I JUST DON'T SEE WHY I HAVE TO WASTE MY LIFE HERE.

YOU THINK *GROWING FOOD* IS A *WASTE OF TIME?*

NO...

IT'S JUST THAT...I COULD DO SO MUCH *MORE.*

I COULD *SAVE THE WORLD,* DAD.

SAVE IT *QUICK,* OR SAVE IT *RIGHT?*

THERE'S BEEN PLENTY OF MEN OVER THE YEARS WHO TOLD THEMSELVES IT WAS THEIR DESTINY TO SAVE THE WORLD. AND THEY ALWAYS MADE THE *SAME* MISTAKE.

WHAT MISTAKE?

THINKING IT WAS *THEIRS* TO SAVE.

IF THE WORLD NEEDS YOU, IT'LL LET YOU KNOW.

I LEFT HOME TO SAVE THE WORLD *MYSELF* ONCE, YOU KNOW.

"IT WAS TOWARD THE END OF THE WAR. I WAS SENT TO HELP LIBERATE THE ISLAND OF SAIPAN."

1944.

KENT! TAKE A DETAIL. CLEAR THE CAVES.

"WE'D BEEN BOMBING THE JAPANESE FOR WEEKS. THEY WERE HALF-STARVED AND SHELL-SHOCKED. IN SAD SHAPE."

SURRENDER.

HANDS UP!

"WE FIGURED WE'D ROUND UP ALL THE PRISONERS IN AN AFTERNOON.

"ONE OF THE PRISONERS DETONATED HIMSELF, TAKING THE OTHER PRISONERS AND HALF OUR UNIT WITH HIM.

KAB Baaam!!!

"I NEVER KNEW MEN WERE CAPABLE OF SUCH THINGS."

KENT? KENT, YOU ALIVE?

"AS BEATEN AS THEY WERE, THEY HAD ***NO THOUGHT*** OF SURRENDERING. I KNEW AT THAT MOMENT WE'D HAVE TO KILL ***EVERY SOLDIER*** ON THAT ISLAND.

"PRETTY MUCH EVERY STRUCTURE ON SAIPAN HAD BEEN DESTROYED DURING THE SHELLING."

COME OUT! COME OUT ***NOW!***

"SO ***EVERYONE*** WAS HIDING IN THE CAVES, SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS ALIKE. YOU NEVER KNEW ***WHO*** WAS GOING TO COME OUT."

"ONE TRICK WE LEARNED WAS TO LOOK FOR BURNING *CIGARETTES.*

"ONLY THE SOLDIERS HAD CIGARETTES. WHICH THEY'D BEEN SAVIN' FOR MONTHS. SOMETIMES JUST FOR THIS OCCASION. THE OCCASION OF THEIR *DEATH.*

"IT WAS A SMALL TELL, BUT BIG ENOUGH THAT IT SAVED MY LIFE A COUPLE OF TIMES."

AAAAAGH!

BLAM!

BLAM!

"IT WAS WHEN YOU *DIDN'T* SEE THE LIGHT THAT YOU WERE REALLY ON EDGE."

COME OUT!

"WONDERING WHAT WAS STARING BACK AT YOU."

FLICK

"YOU'D JUST STAND THERE, STARING INTO THE DARKNESS.

"HE MUST'VE USED THE LIGHTER TO FIND HIS WAY OUT OF THE CAVE. HE COULDN'T HAVE BEEN MORE THAN TWELVE.

"AND I'D SHOT HIM.

"THEY SAY THAT YOU SEE THE FACE OF EVERYONE YOU'VE EVER KILLED WHEN YOU CLOSE YOUR EYES TO GO TO SLEEP.

"BUT THE TRUTH IS *WORSE.*

"AFTER A WHILE, YOU DON'T SEE THEM AT ALL.

"THE DEAD DISAPPEAR BECAUSE WE NEED THEM TO."

"BECAUSE THAT'S THE PRICE OF OUR SURVIVAL.

C'MON, KENT. WE'VE GOT OTHER CAVES TO CLEAR.

"THE PRICE WE PAY TO MAKE ROOM FOR THE LIVING.

"WE SHIPPED OUT SOON AFTER THAT."

DAD, I NEVER KNEW--

I WASN'T HOME BUT FOR A FEW MONTHS BEFORE YOU ARRIVED.

"EVERYTHING FELT SO ***BROKEN*** AFTER THE WAR. I GUESS I WAS LOOKING TO THE UNIVERSE FOR SOME SORT OF ***SIGN.***"

DO YOU EVER GET ***BORED?*** BACK ON THE FARM, AFTER BEING AWAY AT ***WAR?***

NO, MARTHA. NEVER.

"SOME ***PROOF*** THAT THIS WASN'T ALL SOME HORRIBLE MISTAKE."

I JUST WANT TO SIT AND WATCH THINGS ***GROW*** FOR A WHILE.

WHAT'S ***THAT?***

"AND SURE ENOUGH, THE UNIVERSE CAME THROUGH.

KA-BOOM

"AND YET, IF YOU HADN'T DROPPED OUT OF THE SKY INTO A CORNFIELD...

"...WOULD YOU HAVE BEEN ANY LESS MIRACULOUS?"

MAYBE WE'RE *ALL* A SIGN FROM THE UNIVERSE THAT THINGS COULD BE *DIFFERENT.*

MAYBE THAT'S ALL WE ARE.

WHILE WE'RE GETTING THINGS OFF OUR CHESTS--THERE'S SOMETHING *ELSE* I NEVER TOLD YOU.

WELL, I'LL BE *PIGGLED.*

"THE CAPSULE THAT YOU ARRIVED IN... IT WAS JUST *PART* OF THE SPACECRAFT THAT BROUGHT YOU TO EARTH.

"WE WATCHED AS THE REST FLEW OFF INTO THE NIGHT. I DON'T KNOW WHERE IT WENT.

I JUST KNOW THAT AFTER ALL THE BLOODSHED AND HORROR I'D EXPERIENCED, YOU WERE THE SIGN FROM HEAVEN THAT I NEEDED.

AND I STILL NEED IT.

BUT, DAD, HOW CAN YOU EXPECT ME TO STAY HERE ON THE *FARM?!* TO NOT REVEAL WHAT I CAN DO TO THE *WORLD?!*

YOU SAID IT YOURSELF...THERE'S A PART OF ME *OUT THERE!*

THERE'S A PART OF *ALL OF US* OUT THERE.

AND WITH ANY LUCK, YOU NEVER FIND IT.

There are certain dates on which everyone remembers where they were.

Though it's sometimes harder to remember who we were...

MOM? DAD?

I...I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.

FROM DALLAS, TEXAS, THE FLASH APPARENTLY OFFICIAL...

...before those days changed us **forever.**

...PRESIDENT KENNEDY DIED TODAY AT ONE P.M. CENTRAL STANDARD TIME.

KILLED BY AN ASSASSIN'S BULLET.

Looking back, I think what my dad was trying to tell me was this--that trauma ***sears itself*** into us, no matter how much we try to let it go.

And that our innocence slips away, no matter how hard we hold on.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

I ASSUME YOU'RE HERE TO BID ON THE DEFENSE CONTRACT, TOO?

THAT I AM.

THE NAME'S ***BRUCE WAYNE.*** WAYNE ENTERPRISES.

LEX LUTHOR. LEXCORP.

GENTLEMEN, I'M GENERAL LANE.

WHAT? ***WHY?***

MY SINCERE APOLOGIES, BUT WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO CANCEL THE MEETING.

NO ONE TOLD YOU?

THE PRESIDENT'S DEAD. ***ASSASSINATED.***

THE ARCTIC OCEAN.

U.S. AIR FORCE

UNTIL JOHNSON'S SWORN IN, WE'RE A MULE ON ROLLER SKATES, BOYS.

*SO KEEP YOUR HEAD ON A **SWIVEL.** IF THE SOVIETS ARE GONNA POUNCE, IT'LL PROBABLY BE NOW.*

ROGER THAT, BASE.

METROPOLIS.

THE DAILY PLANET

GREAT CAESAR'S GHOST! WHAT A *DISASTER!*

THE STORY OF THE *CENTURY* AND WE GOT LESS THAN *TWELVE HOURS* TO WRITE IT!

SMITTY! GET ON A PLANE TO DALLAS!

HOW? ALL THE PLANES HAVE BEEN *GROUNDED.*

JEEZ. YOU'D THINK MR. WHITE WOULD BE MORE BROKEN UP. THE *PRESIDENT* JUST DIED.

THAT'S HOW A JOURNALIST *MOURNS,* JIMMY.

WELL, WE GOT ANYONE ON ASSIGNMENT IN TEXAS?

WE DO, CHIEF. BUT YOU'RE NOT GOING TO LIKE IT.

I DON'T LIKE *ANYTHING.* WHO WE GOT?

LOIS LANE.

AWW, *CRABMEAT!* THE KOOKS AND KRANKS WRITER?

WELL, GET HER ON THE HORN. SHE JUST BECAME OUR POINT PERSON ON THE *KENNEDY ASSASSINATION.*

OH, *NO.*

JUST CHAMPAGNE AND CHABLIS.

SO ARE *ALL* YOUR POODLES PSYCHIC, MRS. KRANTZ?

"AS PRESIDENT JOHNSON IS SWORN IN, AMERICA REMAINS ON HIGH ALERT.

"THE SOVIETS ARE ALSO ON HIGH ALERT, WITH SEVERAL NUCLEAR SUBMARINES SURFACING IN THE ARCTIC OCEAN.

IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER THEY ARE THERE TO **OBSERVE,** OR TO TAKE PART IN A PREEMPTIVE ATTACK IN A MOMENT OF NATIONAL WEAKNESS.

IT'S HAPPENING.

NEVER BEFORE IN HISTORY HAS SO MUCH DEPENDED ON THE LIFE OF **ONE MAN.**

YOU SAID IT YOURSELF, DAD. WHEN THE WORLD NEEDS ME, IT'LL LET ME KNOW.

CLARK? WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

I CAN'T WAIT ***ANYMORE.*** I'VE GOT TO ***DO*** SOMETHING!

BUT...DO *WHAT?!*

SOMETHING! I'LL FIGURE IT OUT ON THE WAY.

CLARK!

AT LEAST TAKE A JACKET.

C'MON, MARTHA.

HE'S GOT TO FIND HIS OWN WAY.

WE CAN'T PROTECT HIM FROM THE WORLD ANYMORE.

AND WE CAN'T PROTECT THE WORLD FROM HIM.

SOMEWHERE IN THE ARCTIC CIRCLE.

ANY MOVEMENT, JORDAN?

NOT YET.

PROBABLY JUST WAITING TO SEE IF SOME **AMBITIOUS GENERAL** USES THE TRANSFER OF POWER AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO LAUNCH A FIRST STRIKE.

EVEN SO, KEEP YOUR EYES PEELED.

WHAT ***EXACTLY*** AM I LOOKING FOR, BASE?

ZIIISSH

ANYTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY.

HUH?!

THERE'S A NEW AIRCRAFT ON THE RADAR. ***VERY FAST!***

"FLYING IN AN ***ERRATIC PATTERN.***"

THUD

UHNNFFF!

IT'S ENTERING SOVIET AIRSPACE. IN HALF AN HOUR, THE UNIDENTIFIED OBJECT WILL BE OVER THE KREMLIN.

WE NEED DIRECTION FROM MOSCOW.

THERE'S NO *TIME,* COMRADE. THE ATTACK WE FEARED IS UPON US.

"PREPARE TO LAUNCH."

THIS WILL MEAN THE DESTRUCTION OF *EVERYTHING,* SERGEI.

NO. THE REVOLUTION WILL STILL BE VICTORIOUS.

"IT JUST MAY TAKE AN EXTRA THOUSAND YEARS."

ALL HANDS ON DECK. PREPARE MISSILES FOR LAUNCH.

I'VE GOT TO REACH THEM. STOP THEM... SOMEHOW.

SAVE THE WORLD.

VRRROOOOOO

RA-TA-TA-TA-TA-TAT

CHUKK CHUKK CHUKK

UUNNNGHH!

GOT 'IM.

GOT WHAT?

IF I TOLD YOU, YOU'D GROUND ME.

KLANNGGG

UNIDENTIFIED OBJECT HAS BEEN... DESTROYED.

VERY WELL. STAND DOWN.

WE MAINTAIN OUR CURRENT COURSE. FOR NOW.

LEXCORP

THANKS ONLY TO A NEAR MISS OF FATE, THIS IS NOT A MEETING OF RADIOACTIVE SKELETONS.

YEP! WE SURE GOT LUCKY, MR. LUTHOR!

LUCK IS THE PRAYER OF ***CHILDREN*** AND ***GAMBLERS,*** OTIS. LEXCORP SUCCEEDS BECAUSE WE DON'T LEAVE THINGS TO ***CHANCE.***

LEXCORP SUCCEEDS BECAUSE ***OTHERS*** BELIEVE IN LUCK.

SO...ANY IDEAS ON HOW TO SALVAGE THE MILITARY CONTRACT?

ANY IDEAS AT ALL?

THEY DON'T EVEN HAVE TO BE ***SMART.***

THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT.

OKAY, GET OUT OF HERE. YOU'RE ALL ***WORTHLESS.***

MISS TESCHMACHER, PLACE A CALL.

I WANT TO SPEAK WITH ONE OF THE GENERALS ON THE AWARD COMMITTEE.

WHICH ONE, MR. LUTHOR?

SEE IF YOU CAN FIND ME ONE WITH ***GAMBLING DEBTS.***

THE DAILY PLANET

RELAX, CHIEF.

I'LL RELAX WHEN I'M OLD AND IN MY PUDDING.

LESS THAN *AN HOUR* BEFORE WE GO TO PRINT AND NOBODY'S EVEN *HEARD* FROM THIS DAME!

LOIS WILL COME THROUGH, SIR. YOU'LL SEE.

SHE'D *BETTER.* SHE'S FULL OF FRUIT IF SHE THINKS THE *DAILY PLANET* IS GONNA ACCEPT A *LATE--*

COPY'S IN!

HMM. A LITTLE ARTY. A FEW TOO MANY TEN-PENNY WORDS. BUT...NOT BAD. *NOT BAD AT ALL.*

RUN WITH IT!

PRESIDENT KENNEDY LED US INTO THE SPACE AGE. HE NAVIGATED US THROUGH NUCLEAR PERIL. WE'VE NEVER LIVED IN MORE UNCERTAIN TIMES, AND YET WE COULDN'T HELP BUT SHARE HIS OPTIMISM.

I HAPPENED TO BE IN DALLAS AT THE TIME OF THE SHOOTING.

TAPTAPTAPTAP

I'VE SPOKEN TO MANY PEOPLE HERE. TRYING TO PIECE TOGETHER WHAT HAPPENED...

WOULD YOU MIND SHOWING ME YOUR FILM, MR. ZAPRUDER?

AS A REPORTER, I MOSTLY LISTEN.

I WAS STANDING ON THE GRASS, WATCHING AS THE PRESIDENT'S MOTORCADE ROLLED BY. I EVEN BOUGHT A NEW COAT FOR THE OCCASION.

I DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING. DIDN'T EVEN KNOW ***ANYTHING*** WAS WRONG. UNTIL...

IN TIMES LIKE THESE, WE LOOK IN VAIN FOR THE ELUSIVE REASSURANCE WE CALL HOPE.

...I SAW ***HIS BLOOD*** ON MY COAT. I WAS GOING TO GET IT DRY-CLEANED, BUT I DIDN'T.

I DON'T KNOW WHY.

WHERE IS THIS THING CALLED HOPE? ***WHAT*** IS IT?

I GUESS SOME STAINS YOU JUST CARRY WITH YOU.

IS IT BULLETPROOF, LUCIUS?

OF COURSE, SIR.

WE LIKE TO IMAGINE THAT OUR STRENGTH WILL PROTECT US. BUT HISTORY IS A ***WILDFIRE.***

IT CONSUMES THE WEAK AND STRONG ALIKE UNTIL THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO BURN.

SURVIVAL RATE IN THIS SIMULATION?

FIVE PERCENT, MR. LUTHOR.

THE LIVING ARE BUT THE BURN WARD OF HISTORY.

AND NONE OF US EVER FULLY RECOVER.

WE SIMPLY PICK WHAT WE CAN FROM THE ASHES AND MOVE ON.

AND YET, SOMEHOW, WE KNOW THAT THERE MUST BE ***MORE.*** THAT WE ARE DESTINED FOR SOMETHING ***GREATER.***

THOSE IN WHOM WE INVEST THIS BELIEF WE CALL ***HEROES.***

SO WHY DOES THE LIFE OF ***ONE MAN*** MEAN SO MUCH?

PROXIMITY RAY... ACTIVATED.

IN SHORT... IT DOESN'T.

METROPOLIS.

BUT WHEN YOU TAKE THE ENORMITY OF WHAT THIS MAN MEANT TO A NATION, THE OVERWHELMING GRIEF WE FELT AT HIS PASSING, THE BELIEF IN THE FUTURE HE INSPIRED IN US...

...AND THEN SUBTRACT FROM THAT *ONE ORDINARY LIFE,* WHATEVER REMAINS...

...THAT IS WHAT WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY *HOPE.*

B

FLY BRANIFF

Canad Club

IMPORTED WI

Admi

TELEVIS

APPLIAN

LOEW'S

LOEW'S

GUNFIGHT AT COMANCHE CREEK
STARRING
AUDIE MURPHY

NEWSSTAND

THE STAIN OF HOPE
by Lois Lane

Daily Planet

THE STAIN OF HOPE
by Lois Lane

THE STAIN OF HOPE
by Lois Lane

THE STAIN OF HOPE
by Lois Lane

IS THIS-- IT'S *GOTTA* BE.

IDENTITY CONFIRMED. KAL-EL OF KRYPTON.

CONSTRUCTION SEQUENCE COMMENCING.

HUH?

KRAKOOO

HELLO?

I AM BROADCASTING THIS MESSAGE IN ENGLISH, THE LANGUAGE THIS COMPUTER BELIEVES YOU HAVE THE HIGHEST PROBABILITY OF SPEAKING.

KAL-EL, MY SON, HOW LONG I HAVE WAITED FOR THIS MOMENT.

I AM YOUR FATHER, **JOR-EL.** YOU COME FROM A PLANET CALLED **KRYPTON.** YOU WERE SENT TO THIS WORLD ON THE EVE OF KRYPTON'S **DESTRUCTION.**

THE CRAFT THAT BROUGHT YOU WAS NOT ONLY PROGRAMMED TO BRING YOU SAFELY TO EARTH, BUT TO CREATE THIS **FORTRESS.** THIS **LABORATORY.** THIS **HOME.**

FATHER?

AND TO **WAIT.** IN A LOCATION SO REMOTE THAT YOU WOULD ONLY FIND IT ONCE YOU HAD MASTERED YOUR POWERS.

SENSING YOUR PROXIMITY, IT GAVE OFF A BEACON, TO BRING YOU TO THIS LOCATION, SO THAT YOU YOURSELF MAY BECOME A **BEACON.**

THAT THE PEOPLE OF THIS WORLD MAY SOMEDAY HAVE WHAT THE PEOPLE OF KRYPTON DID NOT.

HOPE.

YOU WERE SENT TO THIS PLANET, MY SON, NOT ONLY FOR **YOUR** SALVATION.

BUT ALSO FOR **THEIRS.**

AND THE DAY **WILL** COME WHEN YOU WILL BE CALLED UPON TO HELP THIS WORLD. YOUR JOB, UNTIL THEN, IS TO BE **READY.**

HOW?

THE DANGERS THAT CONFRONT A WORLD ARE **LEGION.**

AND **UNPREDICTABLE.** TO FACE THEM, YOU WILL NEED TO HARNESS **ALL** YOUR ABILITIES.

THERE IS NO TIME TO WASTE.

BY NOW, YOU HAVE NO DOUBT LEARNED TO CONTROL YOUR **HEATVISION.**

MY **WHAT?**

YOU WILL HAVE DISCOVERED THAT YOU POSSESS A **TOWERING SCIENTIFIC INTELLECT...**

I DO?

AND MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, YOU HAVE NO DOUBT SPENT **YEARS** LEARNING ALL YOU CAN ABOUT THIS PLANET. TAKING IN KNOWLEDGE OF ITS **PEOPLE,** ITS **CULTURES,** ITS **WAYS OF LIFE.** LEARNING FROM ITS GREATEST MINDS AND LEADERS.

AS A GUARDIAN OF THE EARTH, YOUR JOB IS MOSTLY TO **LISTEN.**

HAVING DONE ALL OF THIS...YOU ARE FINALLY **READY!**

WE HAVE MADE FOR YOU THIS SUIT OF KRYPTON'S MOST INDESTRUCTIBLE FABRIC, EMBLAZONED WITH OUR **FAMILY SEAL,** THAT YOU MIGHT NOT ONLY BE THE EARTH'S **CHAMPION,** BUT THE **PRIDE** OF KRYPTON AS WELL.

But I wasn't ready. I wasn't even **close.**

I AM PROUD OF YOU, MY SON.

Perhaps my two fathers weren't so different after all.

They'd both seen enough of destruction.

And had simply hoped to watch something **grow.**

I couldn't let them down.

KNOCK KNOCK

I'M SORRY. I'M SO SORRY.

YOU... YOU WERE RIGHT...

...DAD.

SMALLVILLE TRAIN STATION.

1964.

I PACKED AT LEAST *FIVE* SANDWICHES FOR YOU. WHEN IN DOUBT, HAVE A *SANDWICH.*

I WILL, MOM.

We all agreed that the farm was too small for me. But also, that I wasn't ready to unleash myself on the world.

So we came up with a *compromise.*

I GOT YOU A PRESENT, CLARK.

OH. A HAT.

I would go to Metropolis to become a reporter. *Learn* about the world I was supposed to save. I would *listen.*

IT LOOKED FANCY. AT LEAST FOR *KANSAS.* I THOUGHT IT MIGHT HELP YOU FIT IN. YOU KNOW, IN THE *BIG CITY.*

The day I received this journal, the journal you're reading now, was the day I began a *new life.*

I GOT YOU A PRESENT, TOO.

I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE NICE TO HAVE SOMEONE TO *TALK* TO.

EVEN IF IT IS JUST YOURSELF.

THANKS, MOM. DAD.

FOR *EVERYTHING.*

And said farewell to another.

THE DAILY PLANET

CLAP CLAP CLAP

HERE SHE IS--THE MAN OF THE HOUR!

AND MY *PROTÉGÉE!* LOIS LANE!

DOES THIS APPLAUSE COME WITH A RAISE?

CLAP CLAP CLAP

OR SHOULD I SAY, OUR PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING REPORTER. YOU'RE *MAGIC,* LANE.

LIGHTNIN' IN A *BOTTLE.* AND I WOULD KNOW! I OWN THE BOTTLE.

THANKS, CHIEF. BUT I GOT A SUBJECT TO INTERVIEW.

OH NO YOU AIN'T! FROM NOW ON, ALL THE *CRAP ASSIGNMENTS* GO TO OUR NEW *CUB REPORTER.*

WHAT'S YER NAME, KID?

KENT. CLARK KENT.

WELL THEN, HERE YA GO, *SPORT.* THE KOOKS AND KRANKS COLUMN IS ALL *YOURS!*

UH...ANY TIPS, MISS LANE?

LEARN HOW TO KEEP A *STRAIGHT FACE.*

YEAH. JUST LIKE *THAT.*

Not sure if working the Kooks and Kranks beat was what my father had in mind when he told me to learn about human beings.

But to be honest, it was probably as good a way as any.

IF YOU COULD JUST HOLD YOUR DINOSAUR EGG UP FOR THE CAMERA, DEAR.

I GOTTA BE HONEST. THAT JUST LOOKS LIKE A ROCK TO ME, MR. KENT.

GOLLY. REALLY?

THERE ARE ALIENS ALREADY AMONG US.

What they lack in knowledge, they make up for with conviction.

KENT, AS A WRITER, YOU'RE ***SUBPAR.*** BUT I'LL BE A ***SALTY DOG*** IF YOU'RE NOT THE ***FASTEST TYPIST*** I'VE EVER SEEN!

Bored with how little they actually know, people tend to fill in the blanks with beliefs that make the world a more exciting place for them.

As if the truth was simply a contest to see who could be the loudest.

I'M CLARK KENT FROM THE KOOKS AND KR-- I'M FROM THE *DAILY PLANET.* ARE YOU MISTER...

PARIAH. YOU CAN CALL ME...THE PARIAH.

YOU WANT A DRINK? YOU LOOK LIKE YOU COULD USE A DRINK.

NO THANKS.

YOU SURE? I'M ON MY THIRD.

SO MY NOTES SAY YOU'RE FROM THE FUTURE?

IF I WAS FROM THE ***FUTURE,*** WHY WOULD I COME BACK TO A TIME AS IDIOTIC AS ***THIS?***

I'M NOT ***FROM*** THE FUTURE. I JUST ***KNOW*** THE FUTURE.

SO WHAT HAPPENS...IN THE FUTURE?

WHAT DO YOU ***THINK*** HAPPENS?

IT ***ENDS.***

REALLY? WELL, UH... WHEN?

ABOUT ***TWENTY YEARS*** FROM NOW.

OF COURSE, THAT DOESN'T MEAN THE WORLD COULDN'T END ***BEFORE*** THEN. QUANTUM FLUCTUATIONS COULD CAUSE A ZERO TO FLIP TO ONE OR A ONE TO FLIP TO ZERO. A GOOD DECISION BECOMES A HORRIBLE MISTAKE. A NEAR MISS BECOMES A ***FATAL BLOW.***

THE WHOLE THING COULD GO UP AT ANY MOMENT, REALLY.

BUT IT'S DEFINITELY A ***HARD OUT*** WHEN THE REST OF THE UNIVERSE GOES UP IN FLAMES.

IF YOU DON'T MIND ME ASKING... HOW DO YOU ***KNOW*** ALL THIS?

BECAUSE IT'S MY ***FAULT.***

"I WAS TRYING TO DEVELOP AN ANTIMATTER FUEL THAT WOULD TRANSFORM LIFE ON MY WORLD. ON MY ***EARTH.***

"OTHER SCIENTISTS WARNED ME. SAID I WAS BEING TOO RECKLESS. BUT I WAS SO BENT ON ***SUCCESS...***

"...THAT I LOCKED MYSELF INTO AN ANTIMATTER CHAMBER TO SHOW THEM HOW SAFE IT WAS."

SO WHAT HAPPENED?

THE WORST THING ***IMAGINABLE...***

I SUCCEEDED.

"BECAUSE THAT'S WHEN I UNLEASHED *HIM.*

"HE CALLED HIMSELF THE *ANTI-MONITOR.*

"HE HAD BEEN IMPRISONED BY FORCES TOO POWERFUL AND ANCIENT TO MENTION. AND I HAD SET HIM *FREE.*

"HE EXPLAINED THAT MINE WAS BUT ONE OF AN INFINITE NUMBER OF WORLDS IN AN INFINITE NUMBER OF *UNIVERSES.* THAT WE DWELLED IN A *MULTIVERSE,* RULED BY *CHAOS* AND *UNTAMED POSSIBILITY.*

"HE VOWED TO BRING *ORDER.* ORDER MEANING, AS IT USUALLY DOES, *DESTRUCTION.*

"DESTROYING THE MATTER OF EVERY UNIVERSE UNTIL ONLY ONE, A UNIVERSE OF PURE *ANTIMATTER,* REMAINED."

I DON'T SUPPOSE HE'D CONSIDER LEAVING US THIS *ONE UNIVERSE,* WOULD HE?

NO. I'M *SORRY.*

HE WON'T.

"I DON'T KNOW IF IT WAS AS A *GIFT* OR A *PUNISHMENT,* BUT I WAS GIVEN THE POWER TO SEE AND TRAVEL THROUGH *TIME AND SPACE* SO THAT *NOT ONLY* COULD I WATCH AS MY OWN WORLD WAS RIPPED INTO DUST...

"...BUT EVERY OTHER VERSION OF IT AS WELL.

"SO I CAN SEE EVERYTHING THAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN, RIGHT UP UNTIL THE END.

AND *NO ONE* CAN STOP IT.

NOT EVEN *YOU.*

I'VE SEEN THE LIGHTS GO OUT ON WORLD AFTER WORLD. *TRILLIONS* OF DEATHS.

AND AS MY PUNISHMENT FOR UNLEASHING SUCH *DESTRUCTION...*

...I MAKE MYSELF WATCH.

It was the craziest thing I'd ever heard, and yet it chilled me to the core.

Lois had warned me that the kooks and kranks can get inside your head. And she was right.

Though to be honest, the idea that this world could even hang on for another twenty years seemed, somehow, wildly optimistic.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE, GENTLEMEN. I AM ***GENERAL LANE.*** MY COLLEAGUES AND I WILL BE AWARDING THE DEFENSE CONTRACT TO ONE OF YOUR COMPANIES BASED ON YOUR PRESENTATIONS HERE TODAY.

WE WILL HEAR FIRST FROM WAYNE ENTERPRISES.

AS THE CONFLICTS IN KOREA, VIETNAM, AND ELSEWHERE HAVE DEMONSTRATED, WE CAN STILL ENGAGE THE COMMUNIST BLOC IN A ***CONVENTIONAL WAR.***

AS WE ARE LOCKED IN A NUCLEAR STALEMATE, WE BELIEVE THESE ***PROXY WARS*** SHOULD BE THE FOCUS. THAT ***THIS*** IS WHERE THE STRUGGLE WILL BE WON.

KLIK

"STRENGTH-ENHANCING LIGHTWEIGHT ***BATTLE ARMOR.*** GOOD FOR ***ANY*** CLIMATE. ***ANY*** COMBAT CONDITION.

"***UTILITY BELTS*** CONTAINING SURVIVAL TOOLS AND SECRET WEAPONS THE SOVIETS HAVEN'T EVEN ***DREAMED*** OF..."

"FAST AND VIRTUALLY INDESTRUCTIBLE ARMORED VEHICLES FOR *TACTICAL SURPRISE* AND *MISSION FLEXIBILITY.*

"THIS IS WHAT WILL DELIVER VICTORY IN THE BATTLES OF THE FUTURE."

VERY IMPRESSIVE.

VERY *ENTERTAINING,* ANYWAY. WHATEVER HAPPENS WITH THE CONTRACT, MR. WAYNE, I BELIEVE YOU HAVE A FUTURE IN *HOLLYWOOD.*

BUT HOW DO YOU KNOW ANY OF THIS STUFF REALLY *WORKS?*

WELL, THE *SHORT ANSWER,* GENERAL KNOX...

...IS THAT I TESTED IT *MYSELF.*

KLIK

NEXT, WE'LL HEAR FROM LEXCORP. THE FLOOR IS YOURS, MR. LUTHOR.

MY FRIEND AT WAYNE ENTERPRISES IS CONVINCED THAT CONFLICTS BETWEEN US AND THE COMMUNISTS WON'T GO NUCLEAR. AND HE MAY BE RIGHT...

...FOR A *WHILE.*

BUT LET ME ASK YOU A *QUESTION...*

...WHEN'S THE *LAST TIME* THE HUMAN RACE CREATED A WEAPON...IT NEVER *USED?*

AS BERTRAND RUSSELL ONCE SAID, WE MIGHT EXPECT A SKILLED PERFORMER TO WALK A TIGHTROPE FOR *TEN MINUTES.*

IT WOULD BE UNREASONABLE TO EXPECT THEM TO KEEP IT UP FOR *TWO HUNDRED YEARS.*

MEANWHILE, THE *DESTRUCTIVE POWER* OF THE WORLD'S NUCLEAR ARSENAL IS GROWING *EXPONENTIALLY.*

IN FACT, IF WE *ARE* TO HAVE A NUCLEAR WAR, IT WOULD BE BETTER TO HAVE IT *NOW,* WHILE SOMEONE MIGHT STILL *SURVIVE* IT.

"THAT IS WHY WE PROPOSE TAKING THE MORE REALISTIC APPROACH, ASSUMING THAT WAR *IS COMING.*

"TO SHELTER OUR NATION'S COMMAND STRUCTURE AND PROMINENT CITIZENS TO *SAVE* AMERICAN DEMOCRACY FOR *FUTURE GENERATIONS.*"

UH... THANK YOU, MR. LUTHOR.

WOULD ANYONE ELSE LIKE TO WEIGH IN?

GENERAL LANE, BEFORE WE DELIBERATE, I WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM ONE OF MY PILOTS...

CLAP CLAP CLAP

CLAP CLAP CLAP

LIEUTENANT *HAL JORDAN,* WHO WAS ON PATROL DURING OUR RECENT CLOSE SHAVE WITH THE SOVIETS.

SON, I HEARD YOU ALMOST PUNCHED US A TICKET TO THE DANCE BACK IN NOVEMBER.

WELL SIR, THERE WAS AN UNIDENTIFIED OBJECT. I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHAT...OR ***WHOSE*** IT WAS...BUT IF IT HAD GONE OVER INTO SOVIET AIRSPACE...

...I BELIEVE IT WOULD HAVE BEEN INTERPRETED AS AN ACT OF ***AGGRESSION.***

AND IF IT ***HAD,*** WHAT DO YOU THINK THE LIKELIHOOD THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD HAVE ***RETALIATED?***

HIGHLY LIKELY, SIR.

AND BASED ON YOUR PATROL EXPERIENCE, WHAT DO YOU THINK THE ***PROBABILITY*** IS THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD MISINTERPRET ANOTHER INCIDENT AS AN ***ATTACK?***

ALMOST CERTAIN, SIR.

IF I'M SPEAKING CANDIDLY, I THINK A WAR IS INEVITABLE. THE ONLY QUESTION BEING...

...WHO GETS TO SHOOT ***FIRST?***

THANK YOU, LIEUTENANT.

I WILL REMIND EVERYONE THAT, UNDER PENALTY OF TREASON, YOU ARE UNDER OATH NOT TO DISCUSS ANYTHING YOU'VE SEEN OR HEARD HERE TODAY.

GENTLEMEN, THIS CONCLUDES OUR HEARING. WE'LL SOON LET YOU KNOW WHAT WE'VE DECIDED.

GOOD LUCK, MR. LUTHOR.

OH, NO, ***GOOD LUCK*** TO ***YOU,*** MR. WAYNE!

BAR
The SEAGULL
Repairs
SO TELL ME, ROOK, HOW DO YOU LIKE WORKING THE KOOKS AND KRANKS DESK?
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
JUST A MILK, PLEASE.
GOD. THEY'RE EATING YOU *ALIVE*, AREN'T THEY?
Zigmund's pretzels
HEY, BIBBO! TURN ON *ED SULLIVAN!*
YOU CAN'T LET THEM *GET* TO YOU. WHATEVER THEY TELL YOU... DON'T *BUY* IT.
I DON'T. *USUALLY...*
BUT THERE WAS THIS *ONE* GUY.
WHAT HE SAID WAS *CRAZY,* BUT HE SAID IT WITH SUCH *AUTHORITY.*
APPARENTLY YOU, I, AND THE REST OF THE UNIVERSE ONLY HAVE *TWENTY YEARS* LEFT TO LIVE.
WE HAVE A WONDERFUL SHOW FOR YOU TONIGHT!
HE JUST MADE IT SOUND SO... *INEVITABLE.*
I'VE BEEN COMING TO THIS BAR EVER SINCE, JUST HOPING TO RUN INTO HIM AGAIN.
CLARK, MY DAD WAS IN THE WAR.
YEAH, MINE TOO.

BELGIUM.
1944.

"DURING THE INVASION OF EUROPE, HE WAS TOLD TO HOLD A BRIDGE AT ALL COSTS."

YES, SIR.

"IT WAS A SMALL BRIDGE, NOT STRATEGICALLY LOCATED, BUT HIS SUPERIORS ***SWORE*** THAT THE GERMANS WERE ABOUT TO LAUNCH AN OFFENSIVE AND THAT THIS BRIDGE WOULD BE THE KEY TO THE WHOLE ATTACK.

"THAT A BATTLE WAS ***INEVITABLE.***"

TAKE COVER!

BOOOOM

"AND SURE ENOUGH, WHEN THE WEHRMACHT ARRIVED, THEY FOUGHT A BLOODY BATTLE OVER THIS BRIDGE IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE.

"BOTH SIDES FOUGHT FOR ***DAYS,*** AS IF THE WHOLE WAR EFFORT DEPENDED ON THIS ***ONE BRIDGE.*** BUT NEITHER SIDE COULD TAKE IT.

"MY FATHER LOST MUCH OF HIS COMPANY."

DON'T WORRY, SON. WE'LL GET YOU OUT OF HERE.

"DAY AFTER DAY, BOTH SIDES THREW THEMSELVES INTO BLOODY CONFLICT OVER THIS ALL-IMPORTANT BRIDGE."

"IT WASN'T UNTIL AFTERWARD THAT MY FATHER LEARNED THE REAL GERMAN OFFENSIVE HAD TAKEN PLACE ***FORTY MILES*** TO THE SOUTH.

LANE

"THEY'D FOUGHT THAT BATTLE OVER ***NOTHING.***

"BY CHANCE, HE LATER ENCOUNTERED THE OFFICER WHO'D COMMANDED THE GERMANS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BRIDGE."

HOLD IT!

LANE

"HE ASKED THE COMMANDANT WHY HE'D SACRIFICED SO MANY OF HIS OWN MEN FIGHTING FOR A BRIDGE HE ***KNEW*** WASN'T PART OF THE GERMAN OFFENSIVE.

"IN BROKEN ENGLISH, THE MAN REPLIED."

GERMAN OFFENSIVE?

WE WERE TOLD TO GUARD BRIDGE AT ALL COSTS...

...AGAINST AN ***AMERICAN*** OFFENSIVE.

THE POINT BEING THAT WHILE ***SOME THINGS*** MAY BE WRITTEN IN THE STARS...

...IN MOST CASES, IT'S ONLY ***BELIEVING*** THAT SOMETHING IS INEVITABLE THAT MAKES IT SO.

COME TO THINK OF IT, HE ALSO MADE A BUNCH OF OTHER PREDICTIONS THAT WERE JUST ***CRAZY CAKES.***

THERE YOU GO. WHAT ELSE DID HE PREDICT?

WELL, FOR ***ONE THING,*** HE SAID THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE CONQUERED BY ***INSECTS.*** LIKE THE ***TERMITES*** OR EARWIGS... I DON'T RECALL EXACTLY.

NOW ***THAT*** SOUNDS LIKE A KOOKS AND KRANKS ARTICLE.

SEE? I WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

LADIE'S NIGHT! 2 for 1

I GOTTA THANK YOU, LOIS. YOU REALLY--

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN...

...THE BEATLES!

--PUT MY MIND AT EASE.

THE PENTAGON.

GENTLEMEN, WE'VE BEEN INVITED TO TWO VERY DIFFERENT PARTIES.

WHICH ONE DO WE GO TO?

IF YOU GOTTA HAVE A FOOD FIGHT, IT'S BETTER TO HAVE IT IN SOMEONE ELSE'S KITCHEN.

THE WAYNE ENTERPRISES PROPOSAL ALLOWS US TO ENGAGE THE SOVIETS THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY FROM OUR OWN SHORES.

BUT THE LUTHOR PROPOSAL ACKNOWLEDGES THE ***REALITY*** THAT SOONER OR LATER, THESE PROXY WARS AREN'T GOING TO ***CUT IT.*** THAT WE'RE IN A ***KNIFE FIGHT.*** A CONTEST FOR SURVIVAL BETWEEN US AND THE SOVIETS.

AND WHEN THE ***DUST SETTLES,*** EVEN IF THE ONLY SURVIVORS ARE ONE RUSSIAN AND TWO AMERICANS...THEN ***WE WIN!***

WELL... ASSUMING ONE OF THEM'S A WOMAN.

LOOKS LIKE IT'S UP TO YOU, GENERAL LANE. WHAT DO YOU SAY?

I DON'T LIKE OPERATING ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE WORST IS ***INEVITABLE.*** THAT'S USUALLY WHAT GETS EVERYONE KILLED.

AND YET, I'VE SEEN ***SO MUCH*** OF WHAT PEOPLE ARE CAPABLE OF WHEN THEY THINK IT'S THEIR DESTINY TO RULE THE WORLD.

IT WOULD BE ***NAIVE*** TO IMAGINE THERE ARE LINES THE SOVIETS WON'T CROSS.

CALL THE BIDDING CONTRACTORS. WE'RE READY TO ANNOUNCE A DECISION.

LEXCORP TOWER.

CONGRATULATIONS, SIR!

MISS TESCHMACHER! THIS STRANGE DEVICE I'M HOLDING IS CALLED A *TELEPHONE!*

OH JEEZ. *SORRY,* MR. LUTHOR!

THE NEWS ABOUT THE MILITARY CONTRACT HAS CREATED A LOT OF EXCITEMENT AROUND THE OFFICE TODAY.

THOUGH I DON'T KNOW WHY *THEY'RE* SO EXCITED. IT'S NOT *THEIR* MONEY.

JUST WELL-TRAINED PEASANTS, I SUPPOSE.

TELEPHONE

BUT *I* DID GOOD, RIGHT, MR. LUTHOR?

GOOD? YOU DID GREAT!

GENERAL KNOX, AS OF *TODAY,* ALL YOUR GAMBLING DEBTS HAVE BEEN *PAID.*

SO TAKE THE REST OF THE DAY OFF.

MAYBE GO TO THE *TRACK* OR SOMETHING.

WAYNE ENTERPRISES.
GOTHAM.

LEXCORP ATE OUR LUNCH, DIDN'T THEY?

I BELIEVE SO, MR. WAYNE.

SO WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO WITH ALL THIS R&D?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN? ***LEXCORP*** WON THE DEFENSE CONTRACT.

ACCORDING TO THE TERMS OF THE BID, ALL THIS STUFF HAS TO BE ***DESTROYED.***

I BELIEVE THE SPECIFIC TERM WAS THAT IT WAS TO BE "DISPOSED OF."

ISN'T THAT WHAT I SAID?

THERE'S A REASON WHY I HAD THE LEGAL TEAM INSIST ON THIS LANGUAGE. IT'S BECAUSE A THING CAN BE DISPOSED OF WITHOUT BEING DESTROYED.

IT'S SIMPLY TAKEN...***OFF THE BOOKS.***

SO YOU MAY WANT TO HOLD ON TO IT.

WHY?

BECAUSE WHEN YOU DON'T TRUST THE PEOPLE WRITING HISTORY...

...OFF THE BOOKS IS A PRETTY GOOD PLACE TO BE.

METROPOLIS.

AWW, YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO SEE ME OFF, CLARK.

THE *DAILY PLANET*'S NOT GOING TO BE THE SAME WHILE YOU'RE GONE, LOIS.

ALL ABOARD!

YOU EVER FIND THAT PARIAH GUY YOU WERE LOOKING FOR?

NO! I TRIED THE RENT DIRECTORY, THE POLICE RECORDS, THE PHONE BOOK-- ***NOTHING.***

IT'S LIKE HE JUST ***DISAPPEARED.***

WHEN A LEAD GOES ***DEAD,*** JUST REMEMBER THE ***TWO MOST IMPORTANT RULES*** OF WRITING.

WHICH ARE?

THE STORY ISN'T ALWAYS WHAT YOU ***THOUGHT*** IT WAS.

AND WHEN YOU'RE STUCK ON SOMETHING--

--THERE'S ALWAYS ***SOMETHING ELSE*** YOU COULD BE WORKING ON.

I don't know if there was a specific moment when I suddenly realized that I loved Lois.

But somehow, I've always known that I couldn't live without her.

THE FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE.

Lois has been my constant reminder...

...that whatever strength fate may have granted me...

THE KEY IS TO FOCUS ON WHERE YOU ARE **GOING**, NOT ON THE FACT THAT YOU ARE **FLYING.**

...it's **nothing** compared to the strength I've gotten from the people in my life.

MATTER, ENERGY, AND THOUGHT ARE MADE OF THE SAME QUANTUM PARTICLES, WHICH, IN KRYPTONIAN PHYSICS, WE CALL **ESOTERICA.**

THE EQUATION FOR TRANSFORMING ONE INTO ANOTHER IS AS FOLLOWS--

And that whatever **else** we hope to accomplish in life, no matter how **important** our ambitions, none are greater...

...than to be **worthy** of it.

FFZZZZHHZZHT

GOOD!

EXCELLENT!

BUT YOU COULD'VE FOUND IT EVEN FASTER IF YOU USED YOUR X-RAY VISION.

MY WHAT?!

I HAVE PLACED AN OBJECT ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL. WHAT IS IT?

I CAN'T SEE--

RELAX YOUR EYES.

IT'S...IT'S A *CHAIR.*

WELL DONE.

FATHER, I KNOW YOU'RE JUST A HOLOGRAPHIC PROJECTION. THAT YOU CAN'T REALLY ***HEAR*** ME...

*TRUE. HOWEVER, I AM PROGRAMMED TO RESPOND TO **4.2 QUADRILLION** QUESTIONS. SO... TRY ME.*

"THERE'S SO MANY ***PROBLEMS*** CONFRONTING THE WORLD.

"AND SO MANY DIFFERENT OPINIONS ON WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO SAVE IT.

"HOW DO YOU KNOW WHO'S ***RIGHT?***

WHAT DO YOU SAVE THE WORLD ***FROM*** WHEN THE WORLD ITSELF IS SUCH A ***MESS?***

MY SON...

NO ONE *SAVES THE WORLD.*

*THE BEST YOU CAN DO IS TO HELP PEOPLE **SURVIVE** IT.*

AS AMERICANS, WE TALK ABOUT BEING *AMERICAN* AS IF WE ALL AGREE ON WHAT THAT MEANS. BUT THE TRUTH IS...

...LCOME TO MISSIS IPPI

GO WITH GOLDWATER

...THAT SOME JUDGE *TRUTH* AND *JUSTICE* BY HOW WELL THEY SUPPORT THE AMERICAN WAY.

WHILE OTHERS JUDGE THE *AMERICAN WAY* BY HOW WELL IT STANDS UP FOR TRUTH AND JUSTICE.

FREEDOM

FOR SOME, *FREEDOM* IS SIMPLY THE NAME THEY'VE GIVEN TO THEIR WAY OF LIFE.

SEGREGATION NOW

WALLACE

for PRESIDENT

SEGREGATION FOREVER

BUT FOR OTHERS, FREEDOM IS WHAT THEY CALL...

...THEIR STRUGGLE TO *SURVIVE.*

THE POLICE DIDN'T WANT ANY JOURNALISTS TALKING TO THE FREEDOM RIDERS.

AND SINCE I WAS THERE TO DO JUST THAT, THEY ARRESTED ME, TOO.

BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T HAVE A SEPARATE CELL FOR WOMEN, THEY LOCKED ME UP WITH THE MEN.

FIGURING I'D BE *TERRIFIED,* I SUPPOSE.

NIGHTY-NIGHT, Y'ALL.

BUT IT ACTUALLY TURNED OUT TO BE A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO DO WHAT I CAME FOR.

DO YOU FEEL LIKE AMERICANS HAVE BECOME TOO ADDICTED TO ***PLEASURE,*** TO ***POPULAR CULTURE,*** TO CARE ABOUT YOUR STRUGGLE?

THAT THEY'RE TOO BUSY READING COMIC BOOKS AND LISTENING TO RECORDS TO FOCUS ON ANYTHING ***IMPORTANT?***

PERSONALLY, I'VE NEVER SEEN THE TWO AS MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE.

W. WOOLWORTH CO.

"YEARS AGO, I PARTICIPATED IN THE LUNCH COUNTER SIT-INS.

"WHEN WE WENT IN THERE, WE ***UNDERSTOOD*** THAT THE SEGREGATED LUNCH COUNTERS WEREN'T GOING TO SERVE US.

"SO BEFOREHAND, WE WENT TO A CHINESE RESTAURANT.

"KNOWING THAT WE MIGHT NOT EAT FOR A WHILE, WE TREATED OURSELVES TO A LARGE MEAL.

"AND IT WAS ***WONDERFUL.***

WOOLWORTH'S

"AND, AS IT TURNED OUT, ***NECESSARY.***

"WHEN WE WENT TO THE LUNCH COUNTER, AS EXPECTED, WE WERE BEATEN AND ARRESTED. LOCKED UP OVERNIGHT.

BUT AS WE SAT THERE IN JAIL, I KEPT THINKING ABOUT THAT DELICIOUS MEAL.

AND HOW I PLANNED TO GO BACK TO THAT RESTAURANT WHEN I GOT OUT.

THE SIMPLE PLEASURES, THE THINGS WE LOVE, ARE NOT ***DISTRACTIONS*** FROM LIFE.

BUT SOURCES OF ***STRENGTH*** THAT KEEP US ALIVE.

"THAT HELP US TO *CARRY ON.*"

I'M HERE TO MAKE BAIL FOR LOIS LANE.

Y'ALL MUST GOT THE WRONG JAIL, MISTER.

WE AIN'T GOT NO *LADIES* HERE.

I SEE.

WELL, WOULD YOU MIND CHECKING AG--

BOY, YOU *GOT* YOUR ANSWER.

NOW SHOW SOME RESPECT FOR THE *LAW!*

OF COURSE.

THANK YOU, GENTLEMEN.

G'NIGHT, ROY.

GOOD NIGHT, CLEM.

JUST SHOOT ME A HOLLER IF THEY GIVE YA ANY--

WHAT IN THE--?!

--TROUBLE.

GO CHECK ON THE PRISONERS.

WELL, DIP ME IN HONEY.

DAILY PLANET

LY PLA

HE LONG RIDE TO REEDOM

by Lois Lane

istory is not what happens, it is what's made. ometimes history is made with guns and bombs, 'her times it is made by people armed with little iore than hope. In Mississippi I had the privilege of 'atching history being made with courage. Made by ien and women who refuse to accept that the world annot be more just. And who can prove that merely y marching or taking a ride in a bus (Cont. Page 3)

John Lewis

OUTHERN JAIL MYSTERIOUSL DESTROYED IN EARTHQUAKE

by Clark Kent.

News of the weird! While sleeping in a Mississippi jail, a tornado, earthquake possibly a tumult of exttra-terrestrial origin shattered the walls freeing its inhabitants. 'It all happened so quick nameless) responded. 'I still I woke up.

COAST CITY NAVAL BASE.

1965.

IS THIS THING ON?

WE CAN SEE YOU, MR. LUTHOR.

GREAT! I'M HERE BROADCASTING FROM THE MONOKINI ATOLL, IN THE PACIFIC, A ***THOUSAND MILES*** OFFSHORE FROM WHERE YOU ARE.

WHERE I WILL ***PERSONALLY*** WAIT OUT A ***TEN-MEGATON THERMONUCLEAR DETONATION*** IN OUR VERY FIRST MODEL SHELTER.

"BECAUSE I NOT ONLY ***THINK*** OUR SHELTER WILL SURVIVE THE BLAST...

"...I'M WILLING TO BET ***MY LIFE*** ON IT.

*AFTER THE TEST, YOU CAN FLY OUT TO THE ISLAND AND CHECK ON THE RESULTS YOURSELVES. A VERY **SPECIAL THANKS** TO GENERAL KNOX FOR THE USE OF A COUPLE HYDROGEN BOMBS FOR **TESTING PURPOSES.***

YOU'RE...UH... WELCOME.

WE'RE READY WHENEVER YOU ARE, MR. LUTHOR.

AND A ONE... AND A TWO... AND A...

COAST CITY NAVAL BASE.

KAFOOOOOM

LEXCORP. METROPOLIS.

HANG ON TO THAT. I MIGHT PUT IT UP IN MY SUNROOM.

SO, BY NOW, I IMAGINE ***EVEN YOU'VE*** GUESSED WHY I CHOSE TO HAVE TODAY'S MEETING IN OUR FALLOUT SHELTER.

DID...WHAT I THINK JUST HAPPENED ACTUALLY HAPPEN?

YOU MEAN THE TEST...THE WHOLE CONTRACT...IS A ***FAKE?***

NO THANKS TO ***YOU,*** LEXCORP IS ABOUT TO TAKE A ***BIG LEAP*** UP THE FORTUNE 500.

THE UNITED STATES WILL UNDOUBTEDLY INTERPRET THE BOMBING OF A NAVAL BASE AND MAJOR CITY AS A ***FIRST STRIKE*** BY THE SOVIET UNION.

ARE YOU ***MAD?!***

AT ***YOU?*** NEVER.

I THINK I'M GONNA BE SICK.

THE U.S. WILL RETURN FIRE. THE SOVIETS WILL RESPOND.

THE WAR WILL ESCALATE, AS WARS DO...

AND WE WILL WAIT IT OUT SAFELY DOWN HERE.

WE...THE LAST REMNANTS OF HUMANITY.

BIDING OUR TIME UNTIL WE CAN SAFELY EMERGE AGAIN.

"AND *REBUILD* THE WORLD. THE WAY IT ALWAYS SHOULD HAVE BEEN."

CANI

AS YOUR HEAD OF RESEARCH, I CANNOT BE A PARTY TO THE *DESTRUCTION* OF THE *HUMAN RACE.*

BUT, MR. STONE, I'M NOT *DESTROYING* IT... I'M *SAVING* IT.

AT LEAST, THE PART I *CARE* ABOUT.

WHICH IS ALL ANYONE EVER DOES, WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT.

BUT! I UNDERSTAND IF NOT *EVERYONE* IS ON BOARD WITH OUR AGGRESSIVE TAKEOVER STRATEGY.

SO I HEREBY OFFER YOU THIS SEVERANCE CHECK FOR *ONE MILLION DOLLARS.*

To: Dr. Silas Stone

One Million Dollars

I'D SPEND IT *QUICKLY,* THOUGH.

THE REST OF YOU MIGHT WANT TO TRY THE *FRUIT.* COULD BE A *WHILE* BEFORE YOU SEE ANY MORE.

THE DAILY PLANET

LANE!

I NEED YOU TO COVER THE STORY ABOUT *COAST CITY.* NOW!

WHAT ABOUT COAST CITY?

THERE *ISN'T ONE* ANYMORE.

Of all the people in my life, no one has taught me more about heroism than Lois Lane.

LOIS, WAIT!

PLEASE. I'VE GOT TO *GO,* CLARK!

That being a hero is not about doing something spectacular.

That it's not about being strong, or smart, or having powers that others don't.

JUST...BE *CAREFUL.*

I'LL...I'LL SEE YOU LATER, SMALLVILLE.

ON MY WAY, CHIEF.

Heroism is simply the act of being where you are needed most.

OUTSIDE COAST CITY.

WE HAVE VISUAL CONFIRMATION, BASE.

COAST CITY IS GONE.

SEARCH THE SOUTHWEST SECTOR FOR SOVIET BOMBERS IN CASE THEY ARE RETURNING TO CUBA TO REFUEL.

EVERYONE ELSE PATROL THE COAST. I'LL SWEEP DOWN TOWARD THE BORDER.

LOOKS LIKE THIS IS THE ***BIG ONE,*** BOYS.

WHAT ARE THE TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT, SQUADRON LEADER?

SHOOT FIRST.

QUESTION ANYONE WHO SURVIVES.

WAYNE MANOR. GOTHAM.

PUT ME THROUGH TO THE SECRETARY OF ENERGY.

THIS IS KIND OF A **BAD TIME,** MR. WAYNE--

I KNOW IT'S A BAD TIME. THAT'S ***WHY*** I'M CALLING.

WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS...ARE ALL THE WARHEADS IN YOUR NUCLEAR ARSENAL ACCOUNTED FOR?

MASTER BRUCE?

THEY ARE? WELL, ARE THEY ALL IN MILITARY CUSTODY?

ALL EXCEPT ***TWO?*** AND WHERE ARE THEY?

LEXCORP.

I SEE.

UNDER THE ***CIRCUMSTANCES,*** SIR...

...I WONDER IF IT MIGHT NOT BE ***WISE*** TO HEAD TO THE BOMB SHELTER?

UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, I BELIEVE YOU'RE *CORRECT.*

EXCELLENT, SIR. SHALL I MAKE SOME SANDWICHES?

THAT'S OKAY, ALFRED. I'LL GET SOMETHING ON THE *ROAD.*

I've learned a lot about this planet in the last couple of years.

From people I *respect*.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME *TOO MUCH*, SMALLVILLE.

And what they've taught me is *this*.

The world doesn't wait for you to be ready.

My mistake was never in wanting to save the world before I was ready.

It was in thinking I could do it *alone*.

The people who do the most good in this world are not the strongest, the smartest, the most **prepared.** But simply those...

...who **show up.**

UNIDENTIFIED AIRCRAFT, TEN O'CLOCK.

THAT MUST BE OUR BOGEY.

MUST BE A NEW MIG DESIGN. NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT.

RAT TAT TAT TAT TAT

GOING IN TO INVESTIGATE. MAYBE THE PILOT SURVIVED.

THOUGH I WOULDN'T COUNT ON IT.

JORDAN

LOOK, BUDDY.

I'VE DEALT WITH ENOUGH DOWNED PILOTS TO KNOW YOUR TRICKS.

SO LET'S MAKE THIS THE GOOD END TO A BAD--

HUH?

WHO *ARE* YOU?

WHICH *SIDE* ARE YOU ON?

I AM *ABIN SUR* OF THE GREEN LANTERN CORPS.

WE ARE ON THE SIDE OF *LIFE.*

AND WE ARE *LOSING.*

JORDAN

OA.

"WE MONITOR ALL THE WORLDS IN THIS GALAXY.

"ESPECIALLY THOSE ON THE VERGE OF DESTROYING THEMSELVES.

I WAS SENT HERE TO ***ASSESS*** YOUR SITUATION.

I'M...I'M SO SORRY. I'LL GET ***HELP.***

TO PROTECT YOU FROM YOURSELVES...

I AM ***DYING.*** AND THERE IS NO TIME TO FIND A REPLACEMENT. YOU MUST TAKE THE RING, FROM WHICH OUR POWER FLOWS.

JORDAN

BUT I...I'M NOT ***WORTHY.***

NO, YOU'RE NOT.

BUT YOU ARE HERE.

OF COURSE, I APPRECIATE THE CALL, LEONID.

BUT THE TIME FOR THIS CONVERSATION WAS ***BEFORE*** THE WAR.

WHAT CAN YOU SAY TO STOP ME FROM LAUNCHING A ***NUCLEAR RESPONSE?***

NOTHING, MY FRIEND.

I RESPONDED ***FIVE MINUTES*** AGO.

In the end, history issues only one verdict that matters. Two words that, if uttered, damn us completely...

FFZZZT

KABOOM

...too late.

REALLY? NOTHING?

LEXCORP

NOT EVEN A *SMALL* RUSSIAN CITY?

THE SEISMOGRAPHS ARE STILL SHOWIN' *NOTHING,* MR. LUTHOR.

IF THEY'RE NOT CONVINCED THE DESTRUCTION OF COAST CITY WAS AN ATTACK BY THE SOVIET UNION, THEN WE NEED TO *PERSUADE* THEM. PREPARE TO ANNIHILATE A SECOND CITY.

OKAY, BUT *WHICH* CITY, BOSS?

"*METROPOLIS,* OF COURSE."

LEXCORP

WE'RE UNDER A ***HUNDRED FEET*** OF CONCRETE, SIR.

IT CAN'T BE DETONATED BY RADIO FROM DOWN HERE. SOMEONE WILL HAVE TO GO ***ABOVE GROUND.***

FINE! SEND A ***MANAGEMENT TRAINEE!***

I DIDN'T SPEND YEARS PLANNING THIS TO HAVE IT ALL RUINED...

...BY SOME ***LOSER!***

KER KRR RAUUSH

UNGH!

WHUMP

VRRUUUUMMMM

THEY CALL THIS THE SPACE AGE.

RAT-TAT-TAT-TATTA-TAT

RAT-TAT-TAT-TATTA-TAT

RAT-TAT-TAT-TATTA-TAT

PING

PING

PING

CLANK

PING

PING

CLANK

RAT-TAT-TAT-TATTA-TAT

FOOOOM

A SEMI-OPTIMISTIC CONFESSION THAT THEY'RE LOOKING FOR THE EXIT.

AND YET, HERE WE REMAIN.

WHAT ARE WE FIRING AT? I CAN'T SEE--

RAT-TAT-TAT-TATTA-TAT

TRAPPED IN THIS PLACE.

WHILE THE DREAMERS, POLITICIANS, AND POETS MAY HAVE THE LUXURY OF LOOKING TO THE STARS...

...SOMEONE NEEDS TO MAKE A STAND HERE ON THE GROUND.

AMONG THE DIRT AND RATS.

IN THE GUTTERS OF THEIR INDIFFERENCE.

THWACK

SO LISTEN, TONY. I WANT YOU TO *LEAVE* THE BOMB SHELTER.

AND WHEN YOU GET UPSTAIRS, I'M GOING TO NEED YOU TO PRESS THIS BUTTON.

I DON'T KNOW. IS IT *SAFE* UP THERE, MR. LUTHOR?

IS IT SAFE *ANYWHERE?*

DID I MENTION THAT THIS NEW POSITION COMES WITH FULL MEDICAL--

--AND DENTAL?

WELL, IF YOU SAY SO--

ZZZIIPPPPP

--UH, MR. LUTHOR?

AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF COAST CITY AND THE MYSTERIOUS FAILURE OF THE AMERICAN NUCLEAR ARSENAL TO RESPOND, A CEASE-FIRE WAS CALLED.

THE DEVASTATION WAS COMPLETE, MS. LANE.

I KNOW.

A CHANCE TO ASSESS THE DESTRUCTION.

MY DAD WAS THERE.

AN INVESTIGATION QUICKLY REVEALED THAT IT WAS LEX LUTHOR WHO DESTROYED COAST CITY.

MR. LUTHOR, YOU ARE HEREBY CHARGED WITH TWO MILLION COUNTS OF MURDER.

IN LIGHT OF THEIR *THIRD* NEAR MISS IN AS MANY YEARS, BOTH THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION AGREED TO COMPLETE NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT.

THOUGH NOBODY EVER DID FIGURE OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO THE AMERICAN MISSILES OR WHY THEY NEVER REACHED THEIR TARGETS.

BUT MOST PEOPLE DON'T LOOK TOO HARD AT MIRACLES.

SOMETIMES WE REFER TO THIS AS THE ***SPACE AGE.*** OTHER TIMES, AS THE ***NUCLEAR AGE.*** AS IF WE CAN'T MAKE UP OUR MINDS.

I SUPPOSE TODAY WE MADE OUR CHOICE.

IN ORDER TO SURVIVE DESTRUCTION, WE TURNED OUR EYES INSTEAD TO HOPE.

TODAY IS THE DAY WE CHOSE TO STOP DIGGING OUR OWN GRAVE JUST LONG ENOUGH...

...TO LOOK UP AT THE STARS.

SMALLVILLE, KANSAS.

DAILY PLANET

THE DAY THIS BECAME THE SPACE AGE

by Lois Lane

After the destruction of Coast City and the mysterious f
of the American nuclear arsenal to respond, a cease-fir
called. A chance to assess the destruction. An investiga
quickly revealed that it was Lex Luthor who destr
City. In light of their third near miss in as many
agreed to complete nuclear disarmament. Though nobody
ever did figure out what happened to the American missiles
or why they never reached their targets. But most people

NEED SOME HELP WITH THE HAY?

NAH.

IT'S DOING JUST FINE ON ITS OWN.

I'M GUESSIN' YOU HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE FACT THAT WE'RE NOT ALL RADIOACTIVE GLOBULES?

MAYBE.

I NEED TO ***BELIEVE*** THAT THIS MEANT SOMETHING. THAT IT'S NOT ALL ***HOPELESS.***

BUT TOMORROW IT COULD START ALL OVER AGAIN. OR SOMETHING ELSE WILL DESTROY THE PLANET. SOMETIMES IT FEELS LIKE WE'RE TRYING TO OUTRUN OUR OWN SHADOW.

IT JUST FEELS ***STUPID*** TO IMAGINE THAT I CAN STRAP ON A CAPE, FLY AROUND, AND KEEP THE SHADOW AT BAY.

WELL, MAYBE SO...

BUT THEN...

...MAYBE HOPE IS JUST WHAT WE CALL THE STUPIDITY WE ***NEED.***

ALL I KNOW IS I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT ***ANYTHING...***

...THAT BRINGS US ALL TOGETHER.

ONE MONTH LATER...

UNITED NATIONS BUILDING.

OUR MOMENT OF CRISIS HAS INSPIRED MORE PEOPLE TO COME OUT OF THE SHADOWS.

TO BE COUNTED.

WE USED TO IMAGINE THAT WE COULD KEEP OURSELVES HIDDEN. THAT A DANGER TO THE WORLD WAS NOT A DANGER TO US. THAT IS NO LONGER TRUE.

WE SEE THAT NOW.

AMONG THOSE NO LONGER WILLING TO LEAVE OUR SURVIVAL TO CHANCE. TO ***LUCK.***

LIKE IT OR NOT, WE'RE ***PART*** OF THIS WORLD.

HALL OF JUSTICE

A WEALTHY BENEFACTOR, BRUCE WAYNE, BUILT A ***HALL OF JUSTICE.*** A MEETING PLACE FOR THOSE WHO WANTED TO FIGHT FOR THIS PLANET'S SURVIVAL, RATHER THAN ITS DESTRUCTION.

BECAUSE NO ONE SAVES THE WORLD BY THEMSELVES.

THEY CALL YOU *BATMAN?* REALLY?

IT'S THE EARS.

NOT KNOWING WHO THESE HEROES WERE, THE PUBLIC STARTED COMING UP WITH ITS OWN NAMES FOR THEM.

BUT WHAT WE CALL THEM DOESN'T MATTER.

AT LEAST MINE HAS AN ALLITERATION.

WONDER WOMAN, MEET GREEN LANTERN.

THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT THEY'RE *HERE.*

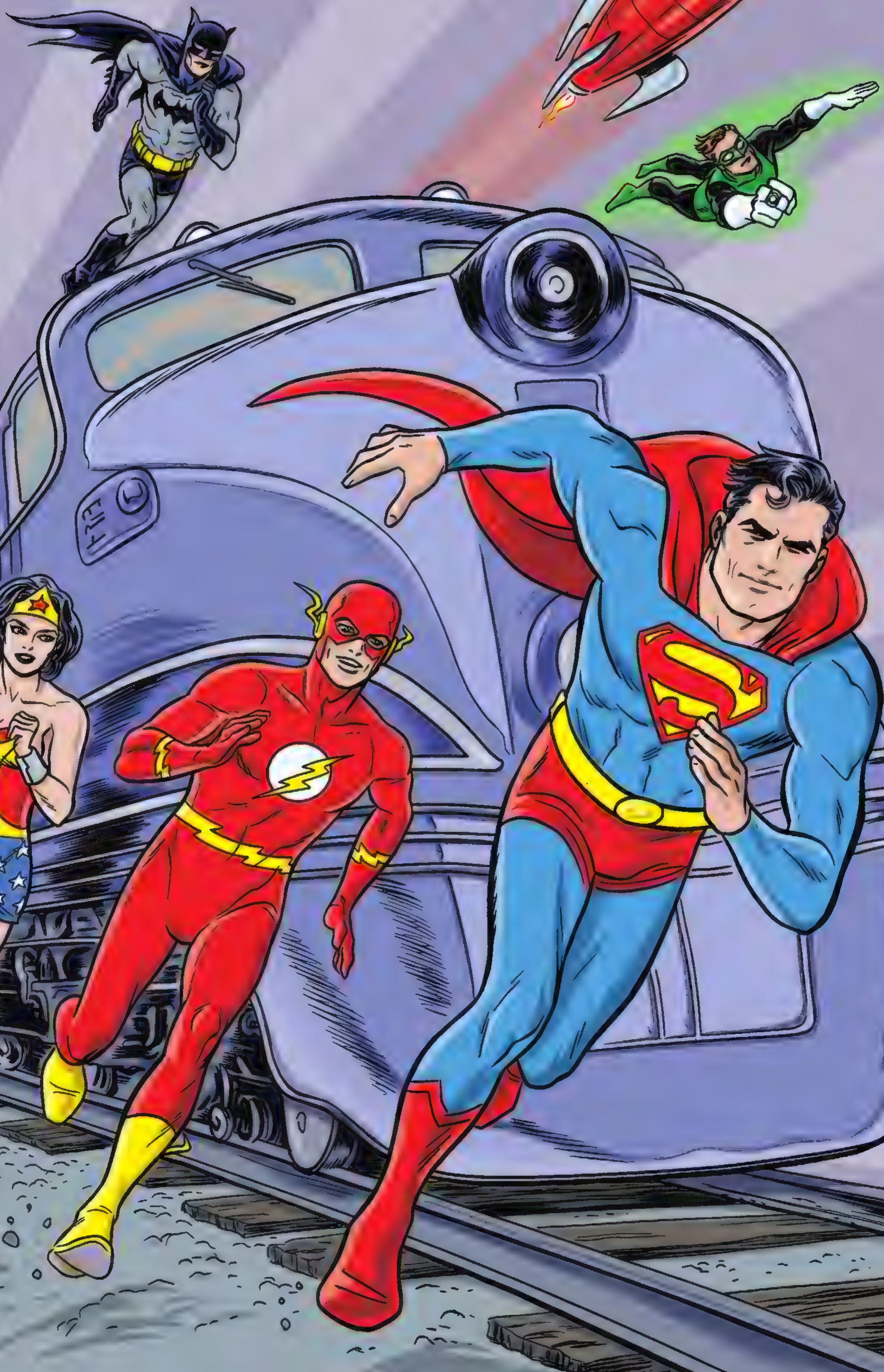
SO WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

I SUPPOSE THAT'S WHAT WE'RE HERE TO FIGURE OUT.

HALL OF JUSTICE

JUSTICE LEAGUE

END OF BOOK ONE.


ALL RED

METROPOLIS.

1972.

PLEASE, SCUTCH. JUST LET ME GO!

WE HAD A DEAL, BABY. YOU *OWE* ME!

PLEASE. SHE DIDN'T MEAN IT!

SHE'S JUST A *KID*, SCUTCH.

SHUDDUP.

C'MON. LET HER GO. I'LL WORK HER STREET--

PLEASE. I MADE A *MISTAKE.* JUST LET ME GO.

AIN'T YOU LISTENIN'? *NOBODY* LEAVES.

FLIK

GOSH. IS THERE A PROBLEM HERE?

ONE WAY

BOWERY
BUS STOP
NO STANDING
PALACE HOTEL
THE CITY CAN BE A DANGEROUS PLACE.
YOU'D BEST MOVE ALONG, COSTUME PARTY.
I AM... UNCONCERNED.
BEAT IT, OR I START WITH--
--HER...
UHNFFF!

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YER DOIN', MAN!

I GOT EVERY COP ON THIS BEAT *PAID OFF!*

YER JUST MAKIN' IT WORSE FOR *THEM!*

DO YOU LADIES HAVE SOMEWHERE TO GO?

YEAH, I THINK SO.

MY PARENTS' HOUSE. JUST GIVE ME AN HOUR'S HEAD START AND I'M *GONE.*

AN *HOUR* HARDLY SEEMS GENEROUS.

WHERE YOU TAKIN' ME?

NEW MEXICO.

HEY MAN. YOU CAN'T *DO* THAT. I GOT *RIGHTS!*

I KNOW YOU DO. AND I RESPECT THAT, SIR.

YOU CAN EXERCISE THEM IN NEW MEXICO.

BAR
The SEAGULL
SHOE STORE
JOE'S
Repairs
Cleaning
CLARK. REMIND ME WHY WE ALWAYS COME TO THIS BAR?
THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION, LOIS. WHY *DO* WE COME TO THIS BAR?
WAIT. IS IT BECAUSE THIS IS THE *ONLY BAR* IN METROPOLIS THAT SERVES *ICE-COLD MILK?*
YOUR INSTINCTS, AS ALWAYS, ARE FLAWLESS.
GOOD GRIEF, SMALLVILLE.
SO... WHAT'RE YOU WORKING ON?
- WATERGATE HOTEL
- DEMOCRATIC HEADQUARTERS
- BREAK-IN
-5 MEN ARRESTED
SOME BREAK-IN. PROBABLY *NOTHING.* WHAT ABOUT YOU?
WELL, I GOT AN INTERVIEW WITH SUPERMAN LATER.
SUPERMAN. WHOA! BIG-TIME STUFF!
WANNA TRADE?
I MEAN, I KNOW IT'S THE *'70S,* BUT ANYONE WHO FLIES AROUND IN A CAPE PROBABLY HAS AN UNHEALTHY NEED FOR ATTENTION.
ANYWAY, GOTTA GO. STAY OUT OF TROUBLE, CLARK.

Living a double life, harboring an unrequited love, almost impossible to get a decent milk in Metropolis...

The SEAGULL

SHOE STORE

JOE'S

Repairs
Cleaning

And yet, I remember these as the ***happiest*** days of my life.

Everything seemed so new, so full of possibility back then.

Who could believe that it would ever come to an ***end?***

WHOA!

IT'S SUPERMAN!

FAR OUT!

Who could believe that the world was anything other than a miracle that would go on ***forever?***

The Space Age made us aware of how many threats lie beyond our horizon. Of what a dangerous place this universe truly is.

SORRY, LITTLE FELLA. BUT YOU'RE HEADED TOWARD A PLANET I CARE ABOUT.

And yet, it all felt so ***abstract.*** Like a fairy tale written by scientists and mathematicians.

Because, in the end, nobody ever quite believes in their own destruction.

WHY, YOU ASK?

WELL, FOR ***ONE*** THING, THERE'S A WOMAN I ***LOVE*** WHO LIVES DOWN THERE.

It's much more preferable to make up stories, to come up with heroes, to convince ourselves that it's going to be all right. That we aren't ***really*** doomed.

NO. I HAVEN'T *TOLD* HER YET. BUT I'M *GOING* TO.

DON'T YOU WORRY ABOUT THAT, ASTEROID!

I'd long forgotten the prophecies of destruction made by the man who called himself the *Pariah*.

I suppose that's why every civilization eventually comes to an end

Nobody ever listens to prophets. Because they never tell you what you'd hoped to hear. They never tell you that you'll find love. That you will watch your kids grow old and happy.

In the end, *every* prophet is a pariah.

And people prefer the comforting lie...

...they call *hope*.

WOW! SUPERMAN!

WOULD YOU SIGN MY LUNCHBOX, SUPERMAN?

ONLY IF YOU PROMISE TO EAT YOUR FRUIT.

THANKS, SUPERMAN!

THANK *YOU* FOR BRINGING YOUR OWN PEN.

SORRY, FOLKS. THAT'S ALL THE TIME I HAVE FOR TODAY.

And who can blame them?

Why would you believe any of this was coming to an end if you didn't have to?

DAILY PLANET

SORRY I'M *LATE,* MISS LANE.

THANKS FOR DOING THIS INTERVIEW. I KNOW YOU DON'T MAKE A HABIT OF TALKING TO THE PRESS.

WELL, I'M A BIG FAN. BEEN FOLLOWING YOUR CAREER FOR SOME TIME.

THEN YOU PROBABLY KNOW WHAT'S COMING NEXT.

SINCE THE DISARMAMENT TREATY, THE WORLD HAS NO LONGER HAD TO LIVE UNDER THE THREAT OF NUCLEAR ANNIHILATION.

BUT FROM THE MOMENT THE INK WAS DRY ON THAT TREATY, THE WORLD HAS HAD TO WORRY ABOUT ***ANOTHER*** THREAT. THE PRESENCE OF AN ***ALIEN*** WHO, IF HE ***CHOSE TO,*** COULD DESTROY US ALL BEFORE BREAKF--

I JUST SAVED THE EARTH FROM AN ASTEROID.

FOR THE MOST PART, THE THREAT OF ***MUTUALLY ASSURED DESTRUCTION*** KEPT THE U.S. AND THE SOVIET UNION FROM EVER ACTING ON THEIR AWESOME DESTRUCTIVE POWER. BUT WHAT ASSURANCE DO WE HAVE THAT ***SUPERMAN*** WON'T--

I JUST SAVED THE EARTH FROM AN ASTEROID.

THERE'S NO QUESTION ABOUT HOW MUCH GOOD YOU'VE DONE FOR THE WORLD. THE QUESTION IS HOW LONG THAT WILL ***CONTINUE.***

WHAT HAPPENS THE DAY YOU DECIDE TO STOP CARING ABOUT US...OR ***WORSE.***

THIS INTERVIEW ISN'T AS MUCH FUN AS I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE.

IT'S NOT REALLY *MY JOB* TO BE FUN.

TO BE HONEST, THE ASTEROID WAS EASIER.

I KNOW YOU DON'T REALLY KNOW ME, BUT YOU'RE SOMEONE WHOSE OPINION I *RESPECT.* SO IF I COULD ASK YOUR OPINION...

...WHAT WOULD *YOU* DO, IF YOU WERE ME?

THIS MIGHT SOUND PRETENTIOUS... BUT I FEEL LIKE I *ALREADY* HAVE A JOB SAVING THE WORLD.

DON'T GET ME WRONG. I THINK YOU'RE *GREAT.* BUT THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE DIED OF STARVATION AND DISEASE DURING THE TIME IT TOOK ME TO SAY THAT I THINK YOU'RE GREAT.

I FEEL THAT, IN THE END, THE WORLD DOESN'T NEED *SAVING* SO MUCH AS IT NEEDS *CHANGING.*

THAT IF WE'RE EVER GOING TO TURN THINGS *AROUND,* IT'S GOING TO TAKE MORE THAN JUST *ONE GUY* IN FIREPROOF UNDERWEAR.

WHY DO YOU ASK?

JUST... CURIOUS.

Lois's words weighed heavily on me. Was this all just ***theatrics?*** Was I actually changing anything?

Maybe people just love me because I look good on a lunchbox.

MAYBE THIS WAS A ***MISTAKE,*** FATHER.

MAYBE THE WORLD DOESN'T ***NEED*** A SUPERMAN.

YOU JUST SAVED THE EARTH FROM AN ASTEROID.

BUT WHAT IF I TURNED ***AGAINST*** THE HUMAN RACE? WHAT IF I'M THE ***REAL*** DANGER TO HUMANITY--

*DO **YOU** FEEL THAT WAY, MY SON?*

NO, BUT--

*THEY ARE SUSPICIOUS OF YOU BECAUSE **THEY** ARE DRIVEN BY GREED, AMBITION, AND FOR THE LUST FOR POWER. SO THEY ASSUME YOU MUST BE THE SAME.*

*IT'S NOT **YOU** THEY FEAR, MY SON, BUT **THEMSELVES.***

BESIDES...

"...THIS UNIVERSE IS HOME TO MUCH BIGGER THREATS THAN **YOU.**"

GOTHAM.

AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF COAST CITY, I STEPPED DOWN AS THE CEO OF WAYNE ENTERPRISES.

SEEING HOW EASY IT WAS TO TURN A CITY TO DUST... TO EXPOSE OUR SAFETY AS THE HOUSE OF CARDS IT WAS...

SITTING IN AN AIR-CONDITIONED BOARDROOM, DRINKING CUCUMBER WATER...WELL, IT JUST FELT LIKE HAVING A FIRST-CLASS TICKET ON THE TITANIC.

I CONCLUDED THAT THE **REAL WORK** COULDN'T BE DONE IN A SUIT.

FFFZZZZZZZ

AT LEAST...NOT A SUIT MADE OUT OF **POLYESTER.**

MERGERS, ACQUISITIONS, HOSTILE TAKEOVERS...

YOU HAVE ***TEN MINUTES.*** THEN WE START KILLING HOSTAGES.

CRRAASH!

KATHUD

...IT FELT SO **INCONSEQUENTIAL** COMPARED TO THE REAL THING.

SO **WANTING** WHEN WEIGHED AGAINST REAL LIVES.

I WAS SAVING LIVES.

PRODUCTIVE NIGHT, MASTER WAYNE?

NOT BAD.

DAILY PLANET
TEN HOSTAGES SAVED BY THE BATMAN

SOMETIMES AS MANY AS TEN A NIGHT.

NOT BAD INDEED. WELL DONE, SIR.

NIXON BOMBS CAMBODIA
THOUSANDS DEAD

THE DECISION TO STEP DOWN FROM WAYNE ENTERPRISES WAS PAYING OFF...

...OR SO I THOUGHT.

WAYNE ENTERPRISES

WAYNE ENTERPRISES

TO FIGHT A WAR, I DRESSED IN ARMOR, NOT UNDERSTANDING...

...THAT ALL THE REAL WARS ARE FOUGHT IN POLYESTER.

WITH THE DEPARTURE OF ***BRUCE WAYNE*** AS CEO, I'D LIKE TO REAFFIRM OUR COMMITMENT TO CORPORATE GROWTH, WHILE MAKING WAYNE ENTERPRISES THE COMPANY OF THE ***FUTURE.***

SO I HOPE YOU WILL JOIN ME IN WELCOMING OUR ***NEW*** CEO...

...MAXWELL LORD!

THANK YOU. I'M HUMBLED AND HONORED. AND I LIKE WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT WAYNE ENTERPRISES BEING THE COMPANY OF ***AMERICAN GROWTH.*** THE COMPANY OF ***THE AMERICAN FUTURE.***

CLAP CLAP CLAP

CLAP CLAP CLAP

CLAP CLAP

CLAP CLAP CLAP

KLIK

OUR ***ARMS SALES*** HAVE BEEN DOING WELL BECAUSE OF THE WAR IN ***VIETNAM.*** BUT WARS COME TO AN ***END.***

SO WAYNE ENTERPRISES ITSELF NEEDS TO LOOK TO THE FUTURE. AND ***HERE*** IS WHERE I THINK THE FUTURE LIES--

EXPRESSWAYS AND ***SUBURBS!***

GET PEOPLE OUT OF THE ***DIRTY OLD CITY*** AND INTO NEW, MODERN SUBDIVISIONS AND GATED COMMUNITIES.

GENTLEMEN, LET'S OPEN UP GOTHAM...

...AND SEE WHAT FALLS OUT.

WAYNE ENTERPRISES

LORD JOINED WITH OTHER MEN IN POLYESTER.

AND TOGETHER THEY DECIDED THE FATE OF GOTHAM OVER A THREE-MARTINI LUNCH.

CONDEMNED

THIS PROPERTY IS CONDEMNED BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE STATE POLICE DEPARTMENT

CONDEMNED BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT. NO TRESPASSING

WHILE I DROVE AROUND IN AN ARMORED CAR--

--WONDERING WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO MY CITY.

PEOPLE FLED, ABANDONING GOTHAM FOR THE FLAVORLESS PROMISE OF A GENERIC TOMORROW.

SHADY PINES

DREAM SUBURBAN LIVING FOR THE RIGHT PEOPLE

THIS PROPERTY IS CONDEMNE BY THE AUTHORITY OF TH STATE POLICE DEPA

WHILE THOSE WHO REMAINED WERE SLOWLY KILLED.

COMING SOON! THOMAS WAYNE EXPRESSWAY BUILT by WAYNE ENTERPRISES

BECAUSE I HAD LEFT THEM TO THE MERCY OF THE MEN IN SUITS.

BECAUSE I WASN'T THERE TO PROTECT THEM.

GOTHAM BECAME THE FRONT LINE IN THE WAR OF POLYESTER.

BUILDINGS STARTED GOING UP IN FLAMES.

THIS IS WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE WHEN A CITY DIES.

Tenants detected. Southwest quadrant.

COME WITH ME.

AS MIDDLE-CLASS GOTHAMITES FLED TO THE SUBURBS, THEY TOOK THEIR MONEY WITH THEM.
THE STREETS BECAME FERTILE RECRUITING GROUNDS FOR GANGS.
YO, I GOT A JOB. WHO WANTS TA MAKE SOME SCRATCH?
THE SPACE AGE. WHAT A JOKE. WE'D BECOME SO PREOCCUPIED WITH LIFE AMONG THE STARS...
JUST GOTTA HELP ME TORCH THIS PLACE.
ZED GROCERY
ONE WAY
OOF!
...THAT, WE DIDNT NOTICE OUR OWN CITIES BURNING AROUND US.
WHO'S PAYING YOU?
TELL ME!
AN OLD POKER SAYING...
...IF YOU LOOK AROUND THE TABLE AND CAN'T TELL WHO THE SUCKER IS...
...THEN YOU KNOW WHO THE SUCKER IS.
Thomas Wayne
Expressway

HALL OF JUSTICE

AFTER WE HAD PULLED THE WORLD BACK FROM THE LEDGE OF DESTRUCTION, I BUILT THE **HALL OF JUSTICE.** TO GIVE THE WORLD SOMEWHERE TO TURN TO WHEN EVERYONE ELSE WAS AFRAID TO ACT.

I THINK WE NEED TO DISCUSS WHY WE'RE HERE. LAY DOWN SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES.

THINGS THAT WE ALL AGREE SHOULD AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, SHOULD ***NOT*** BE DONE.

WELL, I THINK NOT ***KILLING PEOPLE*** IS A GOOD PLACE TO START.

HEH.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "HEH"?

WE ***KILL PEOPLE*** EVERY DAY.

SIMPLY BASED ON WHO WE CHOOSE TO ***SAVE*** AND ***NOT SAVE.***

ANOTHER MISTAKE.

IT'S LIKE THE ***TROLLEY PROBLEM.***

WHAT'S A TROLLEY?

BUT WHAT I HAD **ACTUALLY** CREATED WAS THE WORLD'S MOST EXPENSIVE **DEBATE CLUB.**

WHAT IF THE PRINCIPLE IS THAT WE ***TRY*** TO NOT KILL PEOPLE?

UGH. YOU ARE SUCH A ***SQUISH.***

I ENVISIONED THE HALL OF JUSTICE AS A PLACE TO POOL OUR EFFORTS, TO AMPLIFY EACH OTHER'S STRENGTH.

TO ACT.

ENOUGH.

THE WORLD ISN'T A *TROLLEY.* IT'S A *SHIPWRECK.*

AND DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU *DO* IN A SHIPWRECK? WITH PEOPLE DROWNING EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK?

WHAT?

YOU SAVE THOSE WITHIN *REACH.*

CALL ME WHEN THERE IS A PROBLEM TOO BIG FOR YOU TO HANDLE. OTHERWISE, I WORK *ALONE.*

I'M NOT SURE THAT'S WHAT *MR. WAYNE* HAD IN MIND WHEN HE CREATED THE HALL OF JUSTICE.

YEAH, I'M OUTTA HERE, TOO.

ASK HIM.

WE SHOULD TAKE SOME TIME TO DISCUSS THIS.

UNLIKE YOU, I'M NOT IMMORTAL. ALL THE GOOD I'M GOING TO DO IN THE WORLD, I NEED TO DO ***NOW.***

I don't mind dissent. Dissent is the sound of improvement. It makes you stronger. But this wasn't dissent...

UNLIKE YOU, I CAN'T AFFORD THE LUXURY OF ***TIME...***

...It was *chaos.*

...THE LUXURY OF ***HOPE.***

YOU LIVE AMONG THE CLOUDS. I WOULDN'T EXPECT YOU TO UNDERSTAND THE WAR RAGING IN THE STREETS. THE DAILY BATTLE OVER SMALL LIVES.

I SAVED THE EARTH FROM AN ASTEROID.

YOU'RE WELCOME!

GOTHAM.

THE TROLLEY PROBLEM.

IMAGINE YOU'RE A RAILWAY OPERATOR.

YOU SEE A TROLLEY HEADING, FULL SPEED, TOWARD FIVE PEOPLE WHO'VE BEEN TIED TO THE TRACK, AND THE ONLY WAY TO STOP IT IS TO SWITCH THE TRACK, KNOWING THAT IF YOU DO SO, IT WILL KILL AN EMPLOYEE WHO WAS WORKING ON THE OTHER TRACK.

WOULD YOU **DO** IT? TRADE **FIVE** LIVES FOR **ONE**, AND THE KNOWLEDGE THAT YOU HAD A HAND IN THAT ONE'S **DEATH**?

THE CORRECT ANSWER, OF COURSE, IS **YES**, YOU SHOULD FLIP THE SWITCH. EVEN IF AN INNOCENT PERSON DIES.

NOT TO SAVE THE FIVE LIVES...

WAYNE ENTERPRISES

...BUT TO **DENY** WHOEVER TIED THEM TO THAT TRACK WHATEVER IT WAS THAT THEY **WANTED.**

TO LET THEM KNOW THEY **FAILED.**

THAT THEY WILL **ALWAYS** FAIL.

CRASH

PLEASE! I'LL DO WHATEVER YOU WANT!

I'LL HOLD YOU TO THAT.

BECAUSE, IN THE LONG RUN, **THAT'S** WHAT SAVES LIVES.

BEEP BEEP

WHAT THE--?

I SUPPOSE THE PURPOSE OF THE THOUGHT EXPERIMENT IS TO MAKE YOU CONSIDER TO WHAT EXTENT YOU'RE WILLING TO PLAY GOD.

BUT IF YOU HOLD THE POWER OF **LIFE AND DEATH** IN YOUR HANDS...

...THEN YOU'RE NOT PLAYING.

TORCH LIST

GOTHAM CITY

Maybe Batman was ***right.*** Unless we were united in a common purpose, the Hall of Justice felt like little more than a clubhouse.

A ***hobby*** more than a calling.

YOU JUST HOLD THE BLUE WIRE AND CUT THE GREEN ONE...

UH...WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

DEFUSING A BOMB. WHY? WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

LET ME REPHRASE...

WHY ARE YOU DEFUSING A BOMB... INSIDE THE ***HALL OF JUSTICE?***

WELL, YOU DON'T EXPECT ME TO PRACTICE IN MY ***APARTMENT,*** DO YOU?

THAT WOULDN'T BE SAFE.

AS I AM THE ***WORLD'S FASTEST MAN*** NO OFFENSE, YOU'D BE SURPRISED HOW MANY OH-GOD-THERE'S-A-BOMB-AND-IT'S-ABOUT-TO-EXPLODE CALLS I GET. AND I MEAN, I SHOW UP, BUT ***THEN WHAT?***

JUST RUN AROUND WITH A ***LIVE BOMB*** UNTIL I FIGURE OUT WHAT ***ELSE*** TO BLOW UP? ***THAT'S*** NOT A GOOD SITUATION FOR ***ANYONE.*** SO I FIGURED IT MIGHT BE HELPFUL IF I LEARNED HOW TO DEFUSE A BOMB OR TWO.

THAT'S WHY WE'RE ***HERE,*** RIGHT? TO BE ***HELPFUL?***

WHATEVER. I'VE GOT OTHER THINGS TO DO.

JUST DON'T BLOW YOUR THUMBS OFF.

YOU HOLD THE ***BLUE WIRE.*** NO. WAIT. YOU HOLD THE ***GREEN WIRE.***

THE DAILY PLANET

Or maybe Lois was right. The Hall of Justice. Flying around in a cape. Maybe this is all just a distraction from the work that ***really*** matters.

KENT! YOU'RE OFF THE WATERGATE BREAK-IN.

WHAT?! ***WHY?***

SOMEONE ELSE WANTS IT.

WHO?!

SOMEONE ***BETTER.***

WHAT DO YOU ***MEAN--***

DID YOU BREAK THE NEWS TO CLARK YET-- OH.

:SIGH: I GET IT.

WHAT? NO ***CRYING?*** HOROSCOPE'S RIGHT. TODAY ***IS*** A GOOD DAY TO HAND OUT DISAPPOINT-MENTS.

I'M SORRY, CLARK, BUT YOU'RE JUST TOO ***TRUSTING.***

I FEEL LIKE MAYBE THERE'S SOMETHING BIGGER THERE YOU'RE NOT GETTING. THAT THIS THING GOES HIGHER UP.

LOIS, I DID MY HOMEWORK. THIS BREAK-IN WAS STRICTLY ***AMATEUR HOUR.***

"CLARK, IT WAS A BREAK-IN AT THE ***DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS.***"

"I KNOW, BUT THIS IS ***AMERICA.*** THERE'S JUST CERTAIN THINGS OUR ELECTED LEADERS ***DON'T DO.***

"BESIDES, THEY GOT IN BY ***SCOTCH-TAPING*** THE LATCH FROM THE PARKING GARAGE ENTRY."

SCOTCH TAPE?

"AND THEN WHEN A SECURITY GUARD REMOVED THE TAPE, THEY WERE STUPID ENOUGH TO TAPE OVER THE LATCH...***AGAIN.***

"THAT'S WHEN THE SECURITY GUARD KNEW SOMETHING WAS UP. THAT'S WHEN HE CALLED THE POLICE."

YEAH, WE GOT THREE OFFICERS WORKING THE BUM SQUAD DOWN THERE. I'LL SEND THEM OVER.

"THE POLICE SENT THREE UNDERCOVERS TO THE HOTEL..."

SPEED LIMIT 15

CLEANERS

ONLY

DISPATCH WANTS US TO CHECK ON SOME SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY AT THE WATERGATE.

"...IN A ***SQUAD CAR.***"

LOOKS LIKE THERE'S SOME ACTIVITY ON THE SIXTH FLOOR.

"THE BURGLARS SHOULD HAVE SEEN THE POLICE COMING A ***MILE AWAY...***

"BUT THEIR SPOTTER, AN FBI WASHOUT, DIDN'T NOTICE BECAUSE HE WAS TOO BUSY WATCHING ***ATTACK OF THE PUPPET PEOPLE*** ON TV."

"THE WHOLE THING PLAYED OUT LIKE A BAD TV SHOW."

FREEZE, TURKEYS!

YOU'D THINK IF THEY WERE PART OF SOME ***PLOT*** ORGANIZED BY THE ***GOVERNMENT,*** THEY'D...YOU KNOW...BE ABLE TO FIND ***BETTER BURGLARS.***

SO A COUPLE OF FAILED CUBAN FREEDOM FIGHTERS, SOME EX-CIA, AND AN FBI BURNOUT JUST PLANNED THIS BURGLARY ***ON THEIR OWN?*** WITHOUT ANY ***HELP?***

IT CERTAINLY LOOKS THAT WAY.

THEN DO YOU MIND IF I ASK...

...HOW DID THEY ALL ***KNOW*** EACH OTHER?

THE FIRST RULE OF COVERING POLITICS... JUST BECAUSE SOMEONE'S ***POWERFUL,*** THAT DOESN'T MEAN THEY'RE ***SMART.***

BUT THANKS FOR THE ***HEAD START,*** SMALLVILLE!

Now that I wasn't working the Watergate break-in, I had time to do some thinking.

My mind kept coming back to that trolley problem.

If you could save **five** people by sacrificing **one,** should you **do it?** To me, the answer seems to be **no.**

You should try to save them **all.** Because even if you **fail** and end up sending **five people** to their deaths, you remain the kind of person who will do whatever it takes to save **six.** The kind of person who refuses to play god, even though you have the power to.

And in the end, **that's** what saves the most lives.

I suppose that in the Space Age, in our era of game theory and cold mathematical analysis, operating on that kind of optimism might seem **naive.**

Hokey even.

YOU LOIS LANE? THE REPORTER?

But when all seems lost...

...when the cynical and corrupt are firmly in charge...

...isn't that when you need optimists the **most?**

SMALLVILLE, KANSAS.

CLARK! WE'VE MISSED YOU SO MUCH.

SORRY I HAVEN'T CALLED MORE.

SO HOW ARE THINGS GOING WITH THAT *GIRL?* THE ONE YOU LIKE?

SHE'S 28 YEARS OLD, MA.

AND NOT GREAT.

WELL, LOOK *WHO* THE CAPE DRAGGED IN. WHAT BRINGS YOU TO THESE PARTS, STRANGER? MISS THE CORN?

HE'S GOT GIRL PROBLEMS, JONATHAN.

SO YOU DECIDED TO COME SEE THE *EXPERT,* HUH?

YEP. MOM.

WELL, HAVE YOU TOLD HER HOW YOU FEEL?

I'VE TRIED. BUT IT'S HARD. YOU HAVE TO GET PAST THE *JOURNALIST* FIRST.

WHEN I'M WITH HER AS CLARK, WE SEEM TO UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER SO WELL.

BUT THEN WHEN I'M WITH HER AS *SUPERMAN...*

...SHE SEEMS TO UNDERSTAND ME EVEN *BETTER.*

Most of us in the Justice League maintain secret identities. Which might seem a little silly to the casual observer.

SO HOW WAS *SUPERMAN?*

HE WAS ALL RIGHT.

I mean, we do come up with all these grandiose justifications. That it's to protect those we love. As if there's loads of people out there just itching to tick off Superman.

BUT TO BE HONEST...A LITTLE *DISAPPOINTING.*

IT'S JUST HARD TO TRUST SOMEBODY SO AWARE OF THEIR OWN POWER.

But there is **one** reason to maintain a secret identity they rarely talk about. The one that, to me, makes it a fiction worth maintaining.

It's the only way you can find people still willing to tell you the **truth.**

IT'S LIKE HE'S TRYING THE WHOLE TIME TO ***CONVINCE*** YOU THAT IT'S OKAY THAT HE HAS ALL THIS POWER. OR TO CONVINCE ***HIMSELF.***

I DON'T KNOW, CLARK. I'M TWO THOUSAND MILES AWAY FROM THE SITUATION, BUT TO ME, IT SOUNDS LIKE HER BEING A ***JOURNALIST,*** HER ABILITY TO SEE THROUGH THE RED AND BLUE TO THE MAN UNDERNEATH, ***ISN'T*** THE OBSTACLE.

IN FACT, IT SOUNDS LIKE... THAT'S WHAT YOU ***LOVE*** ABOUT HER.

I DON'T KNOW THIS GIRL FROM CANNED PEAS, CLARK. BUT I KNOW THAT THE ONLY WAY TO EVER FIND OUT IF SOMEONE LOVES YOU...IS TO SHOW THEM WHO YOU ***ARE.***

I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT, MOM.

GLAD WE COULD BE OF HELP.

I HAVE TO ADMIT, I'M SURPRISED.

THAT YOU AGREED TO *ANOTHER INTERVIEW,* I MEAN.

OH, I'M *TOUGHER* THAN YOU THINK.

DON'T WALK

DID I EVER TELL YOU ABOUT THE *ASTEROID?*

YOU MENTIONED IT ONCE OR TWICE, I THINK.

IN FACT, WHY DON'T WE START *THERE.*

GIVEN YOUR ENORMOUS POWER, WHY DO YOU STILL SPEND TIME...YOU KNOW, SIGNING AUTOGRAPHS AND GETTING CATS OUT OF TREES?

HMM. THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION.

HOT DOG, SUPERMAN?

The BEST Hot Dog

GEE, TONY, I'D LOVE ONE! BUT, UH... I DON'T CARRY A LOT OF *CASH* ON ME.

S'ON THE HOUSE, SUPERMAN.

WOW. THANKS!

ALL BEEF

HEY! IT'S SUPERMAN!

WELL, FOR ONE THING, THERE'S THE FREE *HOT DOGS.*

AND TO BE HONEST, I JUST *LIKE* IT.

THANKS, SUPERMAN!

BUT I'VE COME TO REALIZE THAT DOING SMALL THINGS, MEETING PEOPLE WHERE THEY LIVE...IT SERVES A *LARGER PURPOSE,* TOO.

EXCUSE ME FOR A MOMENT.

WHERE YA HEADED, DARLIN'?

ELEVATOR OUT!

SIXTH FLOOR.

SIXTH FLOOR IT IS.

OH! SWEET LORD OF HAM!

:TEE-HEE!:

HOT TEA, COMIN' THROUGH!

THE LARGER PURPOSE BEING THAT IT MAKES PEOPLE FEEL LIKE NO MATTER WHO THEY ARE... NO MATTER HOW GREAT OR SMALL THEIR PROBLEMS ARE...

...SOMEBODY *CARES.*

EXCELLENT TEA, MA'AM.

AND THEN THEY FEEL THAT WAY EVEN WHEN NO ONE'S LOOKING.

MY DAD FOUGHT IN THE WAR, YOU KNOW.

MINE TOO.

"HE WAS IN THE PACIFIC WHEN HIS TRANSPORT WAS HIT BY A TORPEDO.

KA-BOOM

"LUCKILY, HE WAS JUST BELOW THE DECK WHEN THE TORPEDO HIT, SO HE DIDN'T GO DOWN WITH THE SHIP.

"BUT THEN, *LUCKY* IS A RELATIVE TERM.

"MY DAD WAS PRETTY BANGED UP. BUT HIS FRIEND TOBY WAS THERE TO HELP HIM."

A *DINGHY!* STAY HERE, KENT.

I'LL SEE IF THEY GOT ROOM FOR *TWO MORE.*

"AND HE NEEDED THE HELP.

"MOST PEOPLE WOULD HAVE WRITTEN HIM OFF RIGHT THERE. LET HIM SLIDE OFF INTO THE DEEP. JUST ONE MORE DEAD SOLDIER IN A WAR FULL OF DEAD SOLDIERS.

"BUT NOT TOBY."

WAKE UP, KENT!

THEY DON'T GOT ANY ROOM ON THE BOAT.

I'M NOT GONNA MAKE IT.

JUST LET ME GO...

THAT BOAT WAS FULL. BUT THEY RADIOED AHEAD.

THEY'RE SENDING ANOTHER BOAT *TOMORROW.*

YOU JUST GOTTA HOLD ON A LITTLE WHILE LONGER.

"SO MY DAD HUNG ON.

"THE NEXT DAY CAME, BUT NO RESCUE BOAT ARRIVED."

"BUT, FIGURING THE BOAT WAS MERELY LATE, MY FATHER CONTINUED TO HANG ON.

"TOBY DIED ON THE THIRD DAY."

TOBY? TOBY?

"APPARENTLY, HIS HEAD WOUND WAS WORSE THAN IT LOOKED.

"BUT ON THE FOURTH DAY, A BOAT CAME."

WHAT... WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG?

YOU SAID YOU WERE GOING TO ARRIVE ***THREE DAYS*** AGO.

DAI3-22

WHAT ARE YA TALKIN' ABOUT, MAC? NOBODY RADIOED US.

WE JUST HAPPENED UPON YA BY LUCK.

"AND THAT'S WHEN MY DAD KNEW THAT TOBY HAD BEEN ***LYING.***

BUT WITHOUT TOBY TELLING HIM THAT A BOAT WAS ON THE WAY, MY DAD NEVER WOULD HAVE MADE IT.

AND MAYBE THAT'S WHY IT'S SO IMPORTANT TO GIVE PEOPLE HOPE. EVEN WHEN THERE'S NO GOOD REASON FOR IT.

BECAUSE HOPE IS THE LIE WE MAKE COME TRUE.

EARTH.
832654-Z.

WHY DO I *STAY?*

ON A PLANET THAT'S BEEN DESTROYED? AS PUNISHMENT FOR MY FAILURE TO SAVE THEM?

TO SAVE MY *HOME?*

AND WHY DO I KEEP TALKING TO MYSELF?

IS IT BECAUSE I HAVE NO ONE ELSE TO TALK TO?

OR IS IT BECAUSE THE MOMENT I STOP, THE SOUND OF SPEECH DISAPPEARS FROM THE EARTH FOREVER?

UN-FREAKING-BELIEVABLE.

YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF ***NERVE,*** COMING BACK HERE!

THERE IS NO TIME FOR YOUR FECKLESS SENTIMENTALITY.

I STRIPPED THIS WORLD OF ITS NATURAL RESOURCES... ITS OCEANS, ITS BIOSPHERE...BECAUSE THIS UNIVERSE IS ABOUT TO COME TO AN END.

I TOOK NOTHING THAT WASN'T ABOUT TO BE ***DESTROYED.***

BUT I HAVE RETURNED TO ***TELL YOU...***

...I HAVE DISCOVERED A METHOD OF TRAVELING BETWEEN UNIVERSES.

I AM AMASSING MATERIALS, WEAPONS, AND FIGHTERS, TO MAKE A STAND.

TO STOP THE ***ANTI-MONITOR,*** WHO WILL DESTROY THIS AND EVERY OTHER UNIVERSE HE COMES TO.

WHAT DO YOU ***WANT,*** ANYWAY?!

I RETURNED TO ASK YOU...

...TO ***JOIN*** ME.

WHY WOULD I *EVER*--

--WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU EVEN *THINK* I'D CONSIDER JOINING FORCES WITH YOU AFTER WHAT *YOU'VE DONE HERE?!*

YOUR EMOTIONAL OUTBURST IS *UNBECOMING.* PERHAPS I WAS *WRONG* ABOUT YOU.

NO MATTER.

THERE ARE *OTHER* UNIVERSES. *OTHER* EARTHS. *OTHER* KRYPTONIANS.

YOU TOOK *EVERYTHING* FROM ME.

NOT TRUE. I LEFT YOU YOUR FORTRESS.

"HE'S RIGHT. AND PERHAPS HE LEFT THE FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE INTACT KNOWING THAT I HAVE ENOUGH COMPRESSED HYDROGEN, FREEZE-DRIED SOIL, AND SEEDS TO REBUILD THE PLANET.

"BUT WHAT'S THE POINT--

"--WHEN THERE'S NO ONE TO REBUILD IT *FOR?*"

HALL OF JUSTIC

DO YOU HAVE TO DO THAT *HERE?*

KINDA?

MY BOMB CLOSET IS FULL, SO I NEED TO DEFUSE A FEW TO MAKE MORE ROOM.

YOU HAVE A *BOMB CLOSET?*

I THINK THE RED WIRE GOES FIRST.

I'M HERE FOR *ONE HOUR.* CLOCK'S TICKING.

COULD I GET EVERYONE'S ATTENTION? JUST FOR A MOMENT?

THIS IS SORT OF *IMPORTANT.*

THERE IS AN ARTIFICIAL LIFE-FORM... KNOWN TO STRIP WHOLE WORLDS OF THEIR RESOURCES.

AND IT IS COMING *HERE.*

THE BEING IS KNOWN COLLOQUIALLY AMONG THE GREEN LANTERN CORPS AS...

...BRAINIAC.

I'M GUESSING THEY CALL HIM THAT BECAUSE THEY'RE USED TO BEING OUTSMARTED BY HIM?

SPACE VILLAIN. NON-FLYING HEROES ARE EXCUSED, RIGHT?

THIS IS *SERIOUS.*

IF THE ENTIRE CORPS HASN'T BEEN ABLE TO STOP HIM, THEN HE OUTCLASSES *ALL* OF US.

IF THE EARTH IS DESTROYED, I'D HATE TO THINK IT WAS BY SOMETHING THAT LOOKED LIKE *THAT.*

HAL'S RIGHT. WE'VE ONLY BEEN TESTED AGAINST THREATS COMING FROM WITHIN OUR *OWN* WORLD.

WE'VE GOTTEN *COCKY.*

BUT AS MY VERY EXISTENCE PROVES...THERE ARE THINGS OUT THERE, THINGS MORE POWERFUL THAN WE CAN YET GRASP.

IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO SIMPLY HOPE THAT HE DOESN'T COME HERE. WE NEED TO BEGIN PREPARING *NOW.*

ALL OF US.

This threat was big enough that I decided to do some investigating of my own.

To **connect** the dots, you first have to **find** the dots, as Lois would say.

And there were so many dots.

I found planet after planet... stripped **bare.** Looted.

Whatever did this was magnitudes more powerful than I am.

For the first time since I was a child, a cold chill went through my body. A sensation most people call **fear.** And I wondered...

...is this what people felt when they first saw me?

Power is the seed from which monsters grow.

So how do I convince people that among all the other things in the universe they have to worry about...I'm not one of them?

On a planet run by the corrupt and power-mad, it wasn't enough to ask people to trust that I was different.

DAILY PLANET

I had to ***show*** them.

SORRY I'M LATE.

THAT'S OKAY. I'M BEGINNING TO LIKE THE HELIPORT.

I JUST WANTED TO SAY... I UNDERSTAND WHY YOU MAY NOT TRUST ME.

I STARTED DOING INTERVIEWS WITH THE PRESS BECAUSE I DON'T WANT TO BE A ***MYSTERY*** TO THE HUMAN RACE.

I ***WANT*** THEM TO SEE ME FOR WHO I AM.

BUT IT'S JUST...HARD FOR ME.

SO IS THAT YOUR ***ONE WEAKNESS?*** SHYNESS?

WELL, THAT AND ***KRYPTONITE.***

WHAT'S KRYPTONITE?

"I GET MY POWERS FROM THE EARTH'S YELLOW SUN.

"KRYPTON, THE WORLD I COME FROM, REVOLVED AROUND A RED SUN.

I'VE BEEN AWAY FROM KRYPTON SO LONG THAT NOW THE RAYS OF A RED SUN ARE ***POISONOUS*** TO ME.

ROCKS, METAL, REALLY ANY MATTER THAT HAS BEEN ABSORBING THE RADIATION OF A RED SUN IS...WELL, I CALL IT ***KRYPTONITE.***

AND DO YOU THINK IT WAS ***WISE*** TO TELL ME YOUR FATAL WEAKNESS, SAMSON?

NO, I SUPPOSE NOT.

DON'T WORRY, I'LL CONSIDER THAT PART "OFF THE RECORD."

NO. PRINT IT.

ARE YOU SURE?

IN ORDER TO GET THEIR HANDS ON KRYPTONITE, THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE WORLD WOULD HAVE TO COOPERATE IN PUTTING TOGETHER A DEEP-SPACE MISSION OR SCAVENGE EVERY INCH OF THIS PLANET LOOKING FOR WHATEVER TINY SCRAPS OF IT THEY CAN FIND.

SO I FIGURE THAT IF THEY ARE EVER WILLING TO GO THROUGH ***THAT MUCH*** TROUBLE...

...THEN I MUST HAVE DONE SOMETHING TO DESERVE IT.

WELL, I'VE GOT TO SAY, THAT'S THE FIRST INTERVIEW I'VE EVER CONDUCTED THAT INCLUDED MURDER INSTRUCTIONS.

FROM NOW ON, YOU NO LONGER HAVE TO TRUST ME.

WE HAVE TO TRUST EACH OTHER.

DAMN AUTOMAT! OPEN UP, YOU *ROTATING THIEF!*

YOU'RE IN A RIPE MOOD.

I JUST LOST AN EDITOR THIS MORNING. DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW HARD IT IS TO FIND AN EDITOR WORTH THEIR CHEESE?

HOW'D THE INTERVIEW WITH SUPERMAN GO?

WEIRD.

SMITTY? WHY AREN'T YOU IN WASHINGTON?

THE WHITE HOUSE REJECTED MY CREDENTIALS.

THEY JERKED *ALL* OUR CREDENTIALS. EVERYONE FROM THE *PLANET.*

CUZ OF *HER!*

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

BECAUSE OF LANE'S *WATERGATE* ARTICLES, THE REST OF US GOT *BLACKBALLED.*

GET OUTTA MY FACE IF YOU WANNA KEEP WORKIN' HERE, SMITTY.

THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU LET A DAME IN THE TRENCHES.

SHE GETS THE REST OF THE PLATOON *KILLED.*

IT'S HER OR US, CHIEF.

COME ON NOW, GUYS.

BUTT OUT, KANSAS!

NO. I DON'T BELIEVE I WILL.

IF I'D DONE MY JOB *HALF* AS WELL AS LOIS, *I'D* BE THE ONE WRITING THOSE ARTICLES.

IF YOU HAD *HALF* THE COURAGE SHE HAS, *YOU'D* BE WRITING THEM.

YOU EVER *SEE* A WAR?

YOU WANNA KNOW WHO *REALLY* GETS THEIR PLATOON KILLED? IT'S *COWARDS.*

PEOPLE WHO *FREEZE UP* WHEN THE BULLETS START FLYING.

PEOPLE WHO *CLOSE THEIR EYES* AND PRETEND THEY'RE SOMEWHERE ELSE WHILE THEIR BUDDY'S BLEEDING OUT IN NO MAN'S LAND.

SANDWICHES

CAKES

IS THAT *YOU?!* ARE YOU A *COWARD?!*

JEEZ WITH PEAS, MR. KENT!

BECAUSE I THOUGHT YOU WERE A *JOURNALIST.*

EASY, CLARK. WE WAS JUST JOKIN'.

SANDWICHES

MEATLOAF

PIES

YEAH. GOOD WORK, LANE.

ARE YOU OKAY, CLARK?

WELL, ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, I THINK I JUST FOUND MY NEW EDITOR.

FLASH

BAR
The SEAGULL
SHOE STORE
JOE'S
Repairs
Cleaning
PEOPLE RARELY SURPRISE ME, CLARK. SO... WELL DONE.
WHAT GOT INTO YOU?
SOMETHING MY MOM TOLD ME.
YOUR MOM TOLD YOU TO WHIP THE ENTIRE *DAILY PLANET* POLITICAL DESK INTO BLUBBERING SUBMISSION?
I'VE GOT TO MEET THIS WOMAN.
NO, I... UH...THEY JUST MADE ME ***MAD*** IS ALL.
IT'S NOTHING NEW. BEING A ***WOMAN*** IN A ***NEWSROOM...*** YOU GET USED TO IT.
YEAH...
...BUT YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE TO.
BUT IT JUST GETS SO DAMN HARD, YOU KNOW. PRETENDING ALL THE TIME. THAT IT DOESN'T GET TO YOU.
THAT YOU'RE BIGGER THAN EVERYTHING THEY'VE DESIGNED TO MAKE YOU FEEL ***SMALL.***

LIKE YOU'VE SPENT A WHOLE LIFETIME BEING TWO PEOPLE.

AND NEITHER ONE IS REALLY YOU.

EXACTLY.

I'd known Lois for years, but at that moment, I felt like I'd really seen her for the first time.

DO YOU EVER FEEL LIKE IT'S JUST TOO HARD TO GO ON PRETENDING?

THAT SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO LET YOUR GUARD DOWN, SHOW AT LEAST ONE OTHER PERSON WHO ***YOU ARE,*** KNOWING THAT THEY'LL NEVER LOOK AT YOU THE SAME AGAIN?

EVERY DAY OF MY LIFE.

And maybe that's all love is. Seeing somebody for who they are.

And letting them see you.

I KNEW THEIR GAME PLAN. WHICH BUILDINGS THEY WERE GOING TO TARGET.

ANYONE LEFT IN THE BUILDING?

AND IT STILL WASN'T ENOUGH.

JUST A FEW SQUATTERS.

POWER'S BEEN OFF FOR WEEKS.

ALL RIGHT, LET'S TORCH THE LOBBY AND GET OUTTA HERE.

UH...

WE STILL GOT ANOTHER BUILDIN' TA HIT TONIGH--

THERE'S BEEN A CHANGE OF PLANS.

YOU MIGHT WIN A FIGHT HERE. A BATTLE THERE.

UHHNNK.

KRAAASSH

BUT YOU'LL NEVER WIN IF YOU ONLY PLAY DEFENSE.

AND THAT'S HOW THEY DESIGNED THE GAME. WITH YOU ALWAYS ON DEFENSE.

HELP! I'M BURNING!

YOU MIGHT WIN AN ELECTION HERE... A LAWSUIT THERE...

...BUT THAT DOESN'T BOTHER THEM TOO MUCH.

BECAUSE THEY'RE PLAYING BY RULES THEY MAKE UP AS THEY GO ALONG.

BECAUSE YOU'RE NEVER REALLY ALLOWED TO SCORE ON THEM.

SO THEY KNOW THEY'LL WIN IN THE END.

YOU SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH AND THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE.

MACROBIOTIC SOUFFLÉ, MASTER BRUCE?

WELL, THE TRUTH MAY OR MAY NOT SET YOU FREE...

NOT HUNGRY, ALFRED. JUST A WHEATGRASS SMOOTHIE, PLEASE.

...BUT IT SURE AS HELL AIN'T ENOUGH TO LOCK YOU UP.

I COULDN'T STOP THEM FROM BURNING DOWN GOTHAM, BUT I FIGURED THE TRUTH MIGHT. SO I SENT THE GOTHAM GAZETTE EVERYTHING I HAD.

LORD'S SECRET FILES, LINKING HIM TO BUILDINGS THAT HAD ALREADY BEEN BURNED. AND HIS PLANS FOR WHICH BUILDINGS WOULD BE TORCHED NEXT.

I THOUGHT THIS WOULD BE THE END OF HIM.

THAT THEY'D PRINT FOR THE WORLD WHAT I'D SHOWN THEM. AND I GUESS, IN A WAY...

...THEY DID.

GOTHAM GAZETTE

Tuesday, June 8, 1973 — GOTHAM'S GREATEST DAILY NEWSPAPER — Partly sunny, chance of clouds. High 75-80

ANONYMOUS HIPPIE ACCUSES WAYNE ENTERPRISES OF ARSON

The Gazette received documents from an anonymous source which suggest, however unlikely, that it is Wayne Enterprises CEO Maxwell Lord who is behind the recent spate of arsons in the downtown area. Police dismiss these allegations, focusing instead on the Batman night vigilante, who has been seen in proximity to the sites of arson. Maxwell Lord (who, in the name of full disclosure, owns this paper) responded to the accusations as a "baseless smear." "Wayne Enterprises is in the business of building housing, not des[illegible]it," he says. Lord also cited Wayne Ente[illegible] philanthropy efforts and charitable [illegible] further proof of its good intent. "W[illegible] Enterprises has always been a po[illegible]in Gotham and will be for as long a[illegible]. If anything, Wayne Enterprises is [illegible]m o[illegible] rampant street crime," Lord co[illegible] to the recent attack on Wayne[illegible] corporate headquarters. Arso[illegible] of street violence have esca[illegible] [illegible]me residents to the ne[illegible] outside Gotham. "Can any[illegible] leaving?" Lord said. Yet no[illegible] the company's innocence. [illegible] children's entertainer, Jack [illegible]

ANNUAL HOUSING FOR THE POOR FUNDRAISER.
WAYNE MANOR.

WELCOME, MR. LORD!

SUBTLE GETUP, BRUCE.

CAN I CALL YOU *MAXIE?* I'M GOING TO CALL YOU MAXIE.

HEY, *EVERYBODY!* THIS GUY...THIS GUY *RIGHT HERE!* HE'S MAKIN' ME AS RICH AS GRAVY!

I'M GLAD YOU COULD MAKE IT, MAXIE.

ANYTHING FOR A GOOD CAUSE, BRUCE.

I AM AS COMMITTED TO BUILDING A BETTER GOTHAM AS YOUR FATHER WAS.

MASTER BRUCE, I DON'T MEAN TO BOTHER YOU, BUT A SECURITY ALARM HAS BEEN TRIPPED AT OUR SOUTHERN PERIMETER.

PROBABLY JUST A *COYOTE.* BE RIGHT BACK, MAXIE.

A *GOLD TUXEDO,* SIR? IS THIS PROM NIGHT?

THE WHOLE POINT WAS TO WEAR SOMETHING *DISTINCTIVE.*

C'MON! TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE!

YOU KNOW, THERE'S NO SHAME IN A CLIP-ON, ALFRED.

YES THERE IS.

JUSTICE IS A LIE WE TELL OTHERS.

AN UNHEEDED PRAYER FOR MERCY. THE WEAK CALLING FOR A TIME-OUT WE'LL NEVER GRANT THEM, NO MATTER HOW MUCH WE PRETEND WE'RE ON THEIR SIDE.

HOW DOES IT FIT?

A LITTLE LOOSE. BUT IT WILL DO, MASTER BRUCE.

THE TRUTH IS...THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS JUSTICE.

BUT THERE ARE, SOMETIMES...

...CONSEQUENCES.

MMMPH.

PARTY'S OVER.

DO YOU HAVE *ANY IDEA* WHOSE FUNDRAISER YOU'RE CRASH--

BRUCE?

OH MY GOD...IS THIS A *ROBBERY?*

IF YOU PLAY BY THEIR RULES, YOU'LL NEVER WIN.

UNGH!

THE ONLY WAY TO BEAT THEM IS TO LET THEM KNOW...

THWAPP

NOW *LISTEN* FOR ONCE.

...THAT YOU'RE NOT PLAYING A GAME.

WAYNE ENTERPRISES IS *TORCHING* HALF OF GOTHAM.

DRIVING *PEOPLE* FROM THEIR HOMES.

KILLING THEM. ALL TO BUILD YOUR EXPRESSWAYS. TO BUILD YOUR SUBURBS.

AND YET YOU COME HERE TO BREAK OUT YOUR PENNIES. TO FIND A WAY TO STILL *FEEL GOOD* ABOUT YOURSELVES.

WAYNE ENTERPRISES IS BUILDING THE *FUTURE!* WE'RE SIMPLY DOING WHAT'S NECESSARY TO--

SHUT UP!

DOES THIS LOOK LIKE A *DEBATE CLUB* TO YOU?!

HMMMPH.

HOW MANY BUILDINGS YOU TORCH TONIGHT, LORD?! *HOW MANY?!*

TWO... *TWO!*

CLICK

FOR EVERY BUILDING YOU TAKE FROM GOTHAM, I TAKE ONE OF *YOURS*...STARTING *TONIGHT.*

KARROOOM!

WAYNE

KARRUMMM

THE WORST THING YOU COULD EVER DO TO THESE PEOPLE IS TO ASK THEM TO SHARE IN THE MISERY THEY'VE CREATED.

IS THAT...IS THAT WHAT I THINK IT IS?

WAS. IT WAS WHAT YOU THOUGHT IT WAS.

BUT TRUTH BE TOLD, I'D BEEN TAKING THEIR CHECKS. ACCEPTING THE PILLAGE FROM THE MONSTER WE'D FED FOR YEARS.

SO I SUPPOSE THERE'S PLENTY OF CONSEQUENCES TO GO AROUND.

BUT HE SAID THERE WERE *TWO*...

...SO WHAT'S THE *OTHER* BUILDING?

YOU'VE GOT THIRTY SECONDS BEFORE YOU *FIND OUT.*

HRRNPH!

OUTTA MY WAY!

GO! GO!

SORRY, BRUCE!

I'D WASTED SO MUCH TIME ON STREET PUNKS AND GUTTER CROOKS. THINKING THAT THE BIGGEST THREAT TO THE PEOPLE OF GOTHAM WAS THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES.

WHILE THE REAL PREDATORS CIRCLED IN THE SHADOWS.

BASKING IN THE WARMTH OF THE FLAMES THEY'D LIT.

METROPOLIS.

1974.

THE DAILY PLANET

A COPY OF THE *DAILY PLANET*, PLEASE.

YOU CAN GET THOSE ***FREE*** AT THE OFFICE, YOU KNOW.

I KNOW. BUT I CAN'T WAIT THAT LONG.

I'M JUST SO PROUD OF YOU, LOIS.

DAILY PLANET

NIXON TO RESIGN

WATERGATE REVELATIONS END A PRESIDENCY

BY LOIS LANE

I'VE DEBATED TELLING YOU THIS. BECAUSE I WANTED TO ***PROTECT*** YOU, I TOLD MYSELF. BUT THE TRUTH IS... I WAS SIMPLY AFRAID TO SAY ANYTHING. BUT...IF WE'RE GOING TO DO THIS, THEN I NEED TO COME CLEAN.

CLARK? WHAT IS IT?

LOIS... I AM--

SUPERMAN?

YOU ***KNEW?*** BUT HOW?

CLARK...

...I'M THE REPORTER WHO BROKE ***WATERGATE.***

Whatever else is going on in the world, life carries on at the same time. And that's a good thing.

You can't be so invested in saving the world that you forget to live in it.

Or you forget why saving it is so important.

I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU MAN AND WIFE.

FLASH

It's the people you **love** who give you the courage to face the world.

And the world gives you so many people to love.

I *ADMIRE* A MAN WHO MARRIES UPWARD.

SHOWS GOOD JUDGMENT.

A BACKHANDED COMPLIMENT IS STILL A COMPLIMENT, RIGHT?

There are no happy endings in life. But there are some pretty magnificent beginnings.

JUST MARRIED!

You may only have two or three of those moments in your life...

COULD WE GET SOME PRIVACY, PLEASE?

VWHEEP

...but somehow, they're enough to fill a lifetime.

1975.

Everyone talks about the past as if they know the best is behind them. They talk about the future as if they know it will never come true.

And yet, there is nothing I would trade for my memories of that year.

And the hope I carried in my arms.

WELL, THIS IS *IT.* THIS IS WHERE I'VE BEEN DISAPPEARING TO ALL THESE YEARS.

I JUST FIGURED YOU HAD AN APARTMENT IN GOTHAM.

I used to think I was lucky to have two families.

But in truth, they're all **one.**

THERE'S SOMEONE I'D LIKE YOU BOTH TO MEET.

LOIS, THIS IS ***JOR-EL,*** MY BIOLOGICAL FATHER.

OR AT LEAST, AN IMPERFECT ALGORITHMIC COPY OF HIM.

They're the people who make sense of our past.

WELL, I SUPPOSE WE'RE ALL AN IMPERFECT COPY OF ***SOMEONE.***

I LIKE THIS HUMAN.

And they're what we mean when we talk about the future.

PLEASE, MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME.

*BECAUSE... YOU **ARE.***

THIS IS **KANDOR.** WHEN I SENT KAL-EL TO EARTH AS A BABY, IT WAS IN A VERY **SMALL** SPACECRAFT.

GIVEN THE LIMITED SPACE, I HAD TO THINK VERY CAREFULLY ABOUT WHAT TO SEND WITH HIM. WHAT FROM KRYPTON TO PRESERVE.

BABA...

THOUGH A BOTTLED CITY OF MILLIONS SEEMED AN OBVIOUS CHOICE.

FATHER, WHAT'S WRONG?

A DISTURBANCE IN THE EARTH'S MAGNETIC FIELD. AN ENERGY DRAIN I HAVE NOT FELT SINCE...

...IT'S **HERE.**

WHAT'S HERE?

THE HARVESTER OF WORLDS.

MY SON. EVERYTHING YOU'VE BEEN TRAINING FOR... IS HAPPENING **NOW.**

It was the alien Green Lantern had warned us about.

I AM KNOWN BY MANY NAMES ON MANY WORLDS. OF ALL THE MONIKERS I HAVE COLLECTED OVER THE CENTURIES, PERHAPS THE MOST FITTING IS THAT OF... ***BRAINIAC.***

I'd expected him to just start destroying the planet, extracting its natural resources like he had other worlds.

THAT SEEMS PRESUMPTUOUS.

Instead, he first came to us as most invaders do--

--as a missionary.

IS BATMAN TAKING A SICK DAY?

AS YOU NO DOUBT KNOW, I HAVE ALREADY HARVESTED MANY WORLDS.

PRETTY SURE HE'S IN GOTHAM.

DO YOU THINK HE REALIZES GOTHAM IS ON THIS PLANET?

SO ARE YOU HERE TO DESTROY THE EARTH OR NOT?

I ***AM.*** THAT SAID, I'M NOT THE ***VILLAIN*** OF THIS TALE.

NO ONE EVER IS.

I AM MERELY SALVAGING WHAT I CAN FROM THIS UNIVERSE BEFORE IT IS DESTROYED BY ONE ***FAR MORE POWERFUL*** THAN I.

THIS WORLD IS OUR *HOME.*

NOT SOME BOX OF *FREE PEACHES* SITTING BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD.

THE *ANTI-MONITOR* IS DESTROYING UNIVERSES WITHOUT NUMBER...

...AND YOU ARE QUIBBLING OVER *ONE PLANET?*

LIKE *ANTS?*

UH...HAVE YOU EVER *MET* AN ANT?

BECAUSE, LET ME TELL YOU, THEY TAKE THREATS TO THEIR HOME *VERY SERIOUSLY.*

LIKE, THIS ONE TIME, I ACCIDENTALLY SET UP MY TENT NEXT TO A HILL OF FIRE ANTS AND THEY GOT, LIKE, *EVERYWHERE.*

I'M JUST MAKING A POINT.

YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND.

"THE ANTI-MONITOR IS NOT HERE TO *FIGHT* YOU."

THE TIME HAS COME.

BEGIN THE PROCESS. BRING THIS CHAOTIC UNIVERSE TO A MERCIFUL END.

YES, *ANTI-MONITOR.*

"HE WILL BRING THIS UNIVERSE TO AN END JUST AS HE HAS COUNTLESS OTHERS."

SOOL!

"IN HIS OWN WAY AND IN HIS OWN TIME, THEY WILL *ALL* COME TO AN END.

"THERE WILL BE NOTHING FOR YOU TO FIGHT *AGAINST.* IT WILL SIMPLY *HAPPEN.*

I HAVE BEEN PREPARING FOR *CENTURIES.* FOR *MILLENNIA.*

EVER SINCE THE ANTI-MONITOR WAS FIRST IMPRISONED.

PREPARING FOR THE INEVITABLE.

AND WHAT IS EVER *INEVITABLE?*

THE *WORST.*

THE WORST IS INEVITABLE.

"A POWER LIKE THE *ANTI-MONITOR'S* DOESN'T LIE DORMANT FOREVER.

"THE CLIMAX OF HISTORY BEING THAT BRIEF SUMMER BETWEEN WHEN WE DISCOVER THE POWER TO DESTROY OURSELVES...AND THE DAY WE ACT ON IT.

"BUT, KNOWING WHAT THE ANTI-MONITOR WAS PLANNING, I DISCOVERED A WAY TO *TRANSCEND DIMENSIONS.*

"IN ESSENCE, TO TRAVEL FROM ONE UNIVERSE TO ANOTHER.

"I AM ASSEMBLING ALL MY RESOURCES--THE GREATEST MINDS, THE STRONGEST BEINGS--THE MIGHT OF *A THOUSAND UNIVERSES* INTO *ONE.*

"AND IT IS THERE, IN THAT UNIVERSE, THAT WE WILL DEFEAT HIM."

SO WHY THIS *PARLEY?* WHY *BOTHER* TELLING THE ANTS THAT YOU'RE ABOUT TO STEP ON THEM?

THIS *WORLD*... THIS *UNIVERSE*...WILL BE DESTROYED.

AND THERE IS *NAUGHT* YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT.

BUT ITS WEALTH, ITS RESOURCES, CAN BE USED TO SAVE *OTHERS.*

AND ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU ARE HERE TO DO?

WE'RE HERE TO PROTECT THE EARTH, NOT TO HORSE-TRADE IT.

THE EARTH'S WATER, ITS MINERALS... ALL VALUABLE RESOURCES, YES.

BUT THERE IS *ONE* RESOURCE THIS WORLD HAS THAT MAKES IT...UNIQUELY WORTH HARVESTING.

WHICH IS?

YOU.

AND THE OTHER *FOUR BILLION* PEOPLE ON EARTH?

"THEY ARE ALREADY *DEAD.*"

DID YOU REALLY IMAGINE THAT WE WOULD ABANDON EVERYONE ON EARTH...EVERYONE WE *LOVE*...TO SAVE *OURSELVES?*

NO. I SUPPOSE NOT.

AND FOR THE RECORD, THE OFFER WASN'T FOR *ALL OF YOU* TO JOIN US.

JUST *YOU,* KAL-EL, SON OF KRYPTON.

I SUPPOSE THIS MEANS WE'VE GOT A FIGHT AHEAD OF US.

AND THE OFFER REMAINS, KRYPTONIAN...

We imagined this was the first salvo in battle.

...EVEN AFTER YOU'VE *LOST!*

Our combined strength against that of Brainiac.

Winner take all.

We thought we were in for a *fight.*

HUH?

FZAAAASH

But in truth, he didn't *need* to fight us.

MY RING...IT'S *USELESS.*

INVISIBLE JET...

He just did what he came here to do..

...and *dared* us to stop him.

Like turning on a vacuum cleaner, Brainiac's ship began separating the Earth's crust from its mantle.

...ATTACK PLAN OMEGA!

COLLISION COURSE SET.

EJECT! NOW!

Wonder Woman's gambit wasn't enough to destroy Brainiac's ship.

KARROOM

But it bought the Earth a few more precious seconds.

And a few seconds are all I need.

Apparently, while harvesting worlds, Brainiac had been learning. Adapting countermoves to whatever opposition he'd encountered along the way.

But even *I* was surprised that Brainiac had the ability to turn his spacecraft into a ***red sun.***

UNNGGGH!

HEY, MAN. YOU *OKAY?*

YOU SHOULD STAY ON THE *GROUND.* IT'S *DANGEROUS* UP THERE.

YOU'RE NOT EXACTLY MUCH OF A *HELP,* ARE YOU?

I DUNNO. *MAYBE.*

The simulated rays of the red sun were weakening me at an accelerated rate.

FIRST BOMB CLOSET

"I MEAN...I *DID* JUST PLANT A BOMB...OR TWO...OR A *WHOLE BOMB CLOSET'S WORTH...*ON BOARD HIS SPACECRAFT."

WHEN DID YOU DO *THAT?*

"WHILE YOU WERE ALL JAWBONING IN THE HALL OF JUSTICE.

"I JUST GET SO *BORED* DURING THOSE MEETINGS.

"DON'T WORRY. I WAS BACK BEFORE ANYONE KNEW I WAS GONE."

SO...THESE *BOMBS*...WHEN DO YOU THINK THEY WILL--

I DON'T KNOW. I ONLY PRACTICED *DEFUSING* THEM. NOT *SETTING* THEM.

OH. *THERE* THEY GO!

KABOOOOOOM!

TOLD YA!

Brainiac hadn't just been harvesting planets, but knowledge.

LOOK, BUDDY. I'VE DEALT WITH ENOUGH *MIG PILOTS* TO KNOW YOUR TRICKS.

HAL, WAIT!

Knowledge of what people will do to save their world.

SO IF YOU *TRY* ANYTHING--

Knowledge of what makes us strong. And therefore, *predictable*.

HUH?

Predictable, and therefore...

SSPLORCH

UNHHK...

HA!

...easier to defeat.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, I HAVE AN *EVEN SMALLER* CRAFT INSIDE THIS ONE. NOW, IF THERE ARE NO MORE *OBJECTIONS*--

ZZZTTT

RASH

As much as we crave order, there are times...

HUH?

FUSSCHLIINK

...when **chaos** comes as a friend.

UNFORESEEN CONTINGENCY. RETABULATING...

WHIRRRRR

And a **few seconds** of chaos...

..can beat centuries of planning.

HMMM. INTERESTING.

RETABULATING... ODDS UNKNOWN. RETABULATING!

CLK

I FIND YOUR PETTY ATTEMPT AT SURVIVAL...*ABOVE AVERAGE.*

ZAAAPP

UHNFFF!

ZAAAPPP

Today we fought on the side of life.

WAS THIS A WIN?

MORE LIKE A STALEMATE, I THINK.

HAL. HE...HE'S *GONE.*

And, if only for the moment...

...life is *winning.*

APPROACHING INTERDIMENSIONAL PORTAL.

REPORT.

MADE CONTACT WITH PROSPECT ON EARTH 203495-B.

AND?

I HAVE ASSESSED HIM AS ADEQUATE. INVITATION HAS BEEN MADE.

WAS THE PLANET HARVESTED?

NEGATIVE.

WHY NOT?

I ASSESSED A 72.9156 PERCENT PROBABILITY THAT HE WOULD REFUSE TO JOIN IF WE DESTROYED HIS HOME PLANET.

Though we've been deserted, we are not alone...

...because, if no one else, chaos stands with us.

AND WHAT ARE THE MINERALS AND ORGANIC COMPOUNDS OF **ONE PLANET...**

...AGAINST A MAN WHO STILL DREAMS OF TOMORROW?

For what is *chaos*...

WITH THE ABRUPT RESIGNATION OF MAXWELL LORD, WAYNE ENTERPRISES WELCOMES BACK ITS OLD CEO... ***BRUCE WAYNE!***

CLAPCLAPCLAPCLAP

...but the dark ally of ***hope?***

ASHES TO ASHES, DUST TO DUST...WE ARE ALL BUT HERE FOR A MOMENT, TO BE THE EYES AND EARS... AND CONSCIENCE... OF OUR CREATOR.

I didn't know if we had defeated Brainiac, or if he was just testing us...***warning*** us of what was to come.

But we knew that we had to do better if we were going to be ready for next time.

MR. WAYNE'S BUILDING A NEW HALL OF JUSTICE, YOU KNOW.

I KNOW.

And there would be a next time.

SEE YOU MONDAY.

Because that's the nature of life. All we can hope to do is to keep surviving. To make it to the ***next*** next time.

The next *crisis.*

But if there's one lesson you can take from my life, from my birth on Krypton to staring down the end of time, it is this--

IT'S *DADDY!*

CLARK?!

--you're never quite as doomed as people say you are.

END OF BOOK TWO.

UNIVERSE 832654-Z.

"YOU HAVE *NO IDEA* WHAT A PRECARIOUS THING EXISTENCE IS.

"HOW MANY OTHER EARTHS JUST LIKE THIS ONE HAVE ALREADY BEEN *DESTROYED*...

"WHETHER BY THEIR INHABITANTS OWN HAND, ALIEN MARAUDERS...

"...OR JUST *DUMB LUCK.* MAYBE AN EARTH GETS IN THE WAY OF SOME GAMMA RAYS...OR ITS OCEANS ATMOSPHERIZED DUE TO A TEMPORARY BLIP IN THE SURFACE TEMPERATURE.

"*WHOLE WORLDS* FOREVER LOST FOR NO REASON WHATSOEVER.

"BILLIONS OF LITTLE LIGHTS OF CONSCIOUSNESS FLICKERING JUST LONG ENOUGH TO ASK WHAT IT WAS THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO ILLUMINATE--

"--BEFORE BEING SNUFFED OUT *FOREVER.*"

1982. METROPOLIS.

BAR The SEAGULL

SHOE STORE

...SO *GET OVER* YOURSELVES.

Cleaning

BECAUSE, FRANKLY, YOU'RE NOT THAT *SPECIAL.*

I WAS BEGINNING TO THINK I'D JUST IMAGINED YOU.

AS A MANIFESTATION OF YOUR GUILT OR IMPOTENCE?

AS A *BAD DREAM.*

YOU'VE DONE A *SURPRISINGLY GOOD* JOB OF SAVING THIS WORLD, BY THE WAY.

I MEAN, THE END'S *STILL COMING...*BUT WHATEVER TIME THESE PEOPLE HAVE LEFT, THEY OWE TO *YOU.*

MAYBE I'LL SURPRISE YOU THEN, TOO.

I WISH THAT WERE TRUE, BUDDY. BUT ***NO.***

THIS UNIVERSE WILL SOON BE CRUSHED TO QUANTUM DUST. JUST LIKE ALL THE ***REST.***

I MEAN, DO YOU ***REALLY*** THINK YOU DEFEATED ***BRAINIAC?*** IF YOU'RE STILL AROUND, IT'S ONLY BECAUSE HE ***WANTS*** YOU AROUND FOR SOME REASON.

HE'S MORE INTELLIGENT AND CALCULATING THAN YOU CAN EVEN ***FATHOM.***

YOU'RE LIKE A MONKEY WATCHING A ***MAGIC TRICK.*** YOU'RE NOT EVEN SMART ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT IT'S A TRICK.

EVERYONE LIKES TO IMAGINE THAT THEY'RE ***SOOOO*** DIFFERENT! THAT THEY SOMEHOW HOLD THE LOTTERY TICKET NO ONE ELSE DOES.

THAT ALL THE DEATH AND DISASTER YOU SEE AND HEAR AROUND YOU...THAT THOSE ARE FOR ***OTHER PEOPLE.*** THAT WHEN THE END COMES, YOU'LL ***BEAT IT*** SOMEHOW.

BUT, LIKE MOST HUMAN BELIEFS, YOU DON'T BELIEVE IT BECAUSE IT'S ***TRUE.***

YOU BELIEVE IT BECAUSE IT'S ***FLATTERING.***

WELP! I GOTTA ***BLOW.***

WHEN THE ANTI-MONITOR SHOWS UP ON YOUR DOORSTEP, DON'T SAY I DIDN'T WARN YA!

I understand now the Pariah was trying to help me. To warn me that we were still in no way prepared for the dangers yet to come.

And yet we'd become so much ***stronger.***

NOW ***THIS*** IS A HALL OF JUSTICE.

IS THERE ROOM FOR MY TURTLE?

YES. A JETPORT!

IT'S BIGGER THAN THE OLD ONE.

IT'S GOING TO NEED TO BE.

AS THE SON OF ONE LOST WORLD TO ANOTHER, I WELCOME YOU TO EARTH.

--and a fortress from which to save that which could be salvaged

TO THE FIGHT TO SAVE OUR NEW HOME.

THANK YOU, KRYPTONIAN.

I'VE RECEIVED ANOTHER VISIT FROM THE ONE WHO CALLS HIMSELF ***THE PARIAH.***

THE APOCALYPSE HE PROPHESIED MUST BE DRAWING NEAR.

WE'VE GOT MORE HEROES.

The Justice League had found its purpose.

It was a haven for those fleeing the destruction of their worlds, their cities, their lives--

DO YOU TRUST WHAT HE SAYS?

HE HAS NO REASON TO LIE.

HE HAS NO REASON TO TELL THE TRUTH.

WHAT THE PARIAH TOLD YOU IS ***TRUE.*** OUR QUANTUM OBSERVATORIES ARE REPORTING THE DESTRUCTION OF UNIVERSES ADJACENT TO OURS.

THEY BELIEVE THE ANTI-MONITOR PLANS TO DESTROY THIS UNIVERSE AND TO DO IT SOON.

HOW DO THE GUARDIANS RECOMMEND WE ***STOP*** HIM?

AS FAR AS THEY CAN TELL...

...WE ***CAN'T.***

HERE'S WHAT WE KNOW...

I'M SORRY...

...AM I ***BORING*** YOU?!

YES. BUT THAT'S OKAY. I CAN ***MULTITASK.***

IN FACT, IT'S THE ONLY THING THAT KEEPS ME AWAKE DURING THESE MEETINGS.

I MEAN, NO OFFENSE, BUT YOU ALL THINK SO ***SLOW.***

AND, FRANKLY, IT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE THERE'S MUCH WE CAN DO ABOUT IT, ANYWAY.

Lantern explained that the ***Anti-Monitor,*** a being who feeds off antimatter, was methodically draining antimatter from each universe to create a sort of cosmic freezer.

A single universe of pure antimatter. Of pure darkness.

Once a universe had been drained of its antimatter, once it was no longer of use to him, it was ***destroyed.***

At the rate at which antimatter was disappearing from our universe, the Guardians figured we had another year or two left. Before we, too, joined the ***darkness.***

And, as far as I could tell, Flash was ***right--***

--there was nothing we could do about it.

IS HE COMING?

ALPHA CENTAURI B.

I TRANSMITTED A SERIES OF PRIME NUMBERS TO HIS FORTRESS OF UNPLEASANT-NESS.

SHOULD BE A SIMPLE ENOUGH MESSAGE FOR ANY APE-BASED SPECIES TO DECIPHER.

OH. ***HERE*** HE COMES.

EXCELLENT!

ALL RIGHT.

WHAT DO YOU ***WANT?***

WE WANTED TO GIVE YOU THE ***GOOD NEWS.***

WE HAVE CHOSEN TO ALLOW YOUR PLANET TO REMAIN ***UNHARVESTED.***

IT WAS A LITTLE LIGHT ON URANIUM, ANYWAY.

DON'T MISUNDERSTAND... YOUR WORLD WILL STILL BE ***DESTROYED.*** BUT NOT BY ***US!***

THE TIME IS COMING, VERY SOON, WHEN THE ANTI-MONITOR WILL DESTROY THIS LITTLE UNIVERSE OF YOURS.

NONETHELESS, WE HAVE DECIDED TO ALLOW YOUR PLANET'S RESOURCES TO GO TO ***WASTE.***

BUT, IN ***EXCHANGE*** FOR THIS ACT OF FUTILE LARGESSE, WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO RECONSIDER OUR OFFER...

...TO ***JOIN*** US.

WE ARE STORING ALL THE RESOURCES WE HAVE HARVESTED IN A SINGLE UNIVERSE, UNIVERSE 177389-F.

HENCEFORTH TO BE REFERRED TO AFFECTIONATELY AS THE ***MATTERVERSE.***

IT IS ***THERE*** THAT WE WILL GATHER STRENGTH, OPEN A PORTAL INTO THE ANTI-VERSE, AND ***DEFEAT*** THE ANTI-MONITOR.

ONCE THE ANTI-MONITOR COMMENCES DESTRUCTION OF YOUR UNIVERSE, WE WILL SEND YOU THE COORDINATES TO A TRANSDIMENSIONAL ***PORTAL.*** TO SAFETY.

IT WILL BE A ***SMALL PORTAL.*** OPEN JUST LONG ENOUGH FOR A ***SINGLE BEING*** TO CROSS THROUGH.

SO DO NOT ATTEMPT TO BRING ***OTHERS*** TO WHOM YOU HAVE ESTABLISHED UNSEEMLY ***MAMMALIAN AFFECTIONS.***

WITH YOUR ASSISTANCE, WE PROJECT A 17.3289 PERCENT CHANCE OF SUCCESS! WITH A 4.8933 PERCENT UNCERTAINTY QUOTIENT!

DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?

YES.

IN THIS UNIVERSE WHERE YOU'RE MAKING YOUR *STAND...*

...IS THERE AN *EARTH?*

YES. THERE IS.

UNIVERSE 832654-Z.

"IT'S ALMOST IDENTICAL TO YOURS, IN FACT.

"EXCEPT IN ONE *MINOR DETAIL.*

"IN THAT UNIVERSE... THE HUMAN RACE IS *EXTINCT.*"

"HOW?"

"WHO KNOWS? PROBABLY SOME NUCLEAR CONFLICT OR OTHER."

"YOUR CONFLICTS ARE TOO PETTY TO BE WORTH REMEMBERING IN ANY GREAT DETAIL.

"BUT FEEL NO GUILT.

"IT'S ACTUALLY MORE SURPRISING WHEN THIS *DOESN'T* HAPPEN TO AN EARTH.

FURTHERMORE, I AM PLEASED TO REPORT THAT THE PLANET SEEMS TO BE REBOUNDING *NICELY.*

OTHER THAN THE *HUMAN RACE,* OF COURSE.

WHICH, MERCIFULLY, REMAINS EXTINCT.

AND, TO BE FRANK, WE THINK YOU WOULD THRIVE WITHOUT THE *DISTRACTION.*

METROPOLIS CORRECTIONAL FACILITY FOR MEN.

AND WHAT ABOUT LEXCORP'S *PERSONAL HYGIENE* DIVISION? HOW'S THAT DOING?

NOT GREAT, MR. LUTHOR.

WHY? DID IT SUDDENLY BECOME FASHIONABLE TO *STINK* OUT THERE?

THE PROBLEM IS *SHAMPOO,* MR. LUTHOR.

SHAMPOO SALES *SKYROCKETED* WHEN EVERYONE WAS WEARIN' THEIR HAIR *LONG.*

BUT THE HAIR'S *SHORT* NOW.

SO, NATURALLY, SHAMPOO SALES ARE *DROPPING.*

LEMME SEE THAT. *DIRECTIONS.*

LATHER...RINSE...IS THAT *IT?!* ADD THE WORD *"REPEAT."*

THERE. I JUST *DOUBLED* OUR SALES. NOW CAN WE TALK ABOUT SOMETHING *IMPORTANT?*

LIKE GETTING ME *OUTTA* THIS *HELLHOLE?!*

EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT, MR. LUTHOR? CAN I GET YOU ANOTHER ICED TEA?

I'M GOOD, WARDEN.

HE DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE ANY PROBLEM GETTING ME WHAT I WANT.

MR. LUTHOR, IT'S ONE THING TO STRONGARM A WARDEN WITH INCRIMINATING PHOTOS.

BUT TO GET RELEASED FROM ***PRISON*** AFTER MURDERING ***TWO MILLION PEOPLE?!*** THAT'S A VERY DIFFERENT BEAST, SIR.

I ***KNOW.***

THAT'S WHY I ***GOT*** A DIFFERENT BEAST.

I WOULD LIKE YOU TO MEET MY NEW LAWYER...

IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU ALL.

WITH A LITTLE ***PERSUASION,*** I'M CONFIDENT WE CAN COME TO SOME ***ARRANGEMENT*** WITH THE GOVERNMENT.

SMALLVILLE, KANSAS.

THAT'S WHAT YOU WEAR TO SHUCK CORN?

THESE ARE MY WORK CLOTHES.

SO HOW'S *WORK* GOING?

DAD?

IF I TOLD YOU THE WORLD WAS GOING TO COME TO AN END IN A YEAR OR TWO...WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

WELL...

...I'D PROBABLY SPEND LESS TIME SHUCKING CORN.

BUT THEN, I NEVER BECAME A CORN FARMER BECAUSE I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO ***SAVE THE WORLD,*** OR MAKE SOME HUGE ***DIFFERENCE*** IN PEOPLE'S LIVES.

I SUPPOSE I JUST DO WHAT I DO--

--BECAUSE IT'S WHO I ***AM.***

AND MAYBE WE ALL DO.

EVEN IF THE WORLD ENDED ***TOMORROW,*** I'M NOT SURE I'D DO ANYTHING DIFFERENT. BECAUSE BEING HERE ON THE FARM...WITH YOU AND MARTHA...

THIS IS WHAT I ALWAYS WANTED MY LIFE TO BE.

I KNOW YOU JUST WANNA HELP EVERYONE, SON. BUT DON'T WORK SO MUCH THAT YOU FORGET WHO YOU ***ARE.***

NOW GET BACK TO WORK.

I COULD HAVE ALL THESE SHUCKED BY THE TIME YOU BLINK, OLD MAN.

I KNOW.

BUT THEN YOU'D MISS OUT ON ALL MY CORN-BASED WISDOM.

Dad was right. As he sometimes was.

YOU'RE GONNA *GET IT,* BUSTER.

ZZZZWIIIPP

NOT SO HARD!

OOF!

HA! HA! I GOT *GRANDPA!*

LET'S KEEP THIS SNOWBALL FIGHT BETWEEN THE LIVING.

COME ON-- LET'S GO. IT'S *LATE.*

HOW CAN YOU TELL?

WE'RE AT THE *NORTH POLE!*

As I write these words at the end of time, I wish I'd had more moments like these. The ***truth,*** the truth my dad saw, even when I couldn't, was this--

There is no such thing as being so immortal that when the end finally comes--

--you don't wish you had lived a little more.

THANK YOU.

FOR WHAT?

FOR EVERYTHING, LOIS.

That whatever years you could give someone--

BRIIINNNNGGG

--or days or minutes that they otherwise would not have had--

HELLO? MOM?

--are a gift you never fully appreciate--

MOM. SLOW DOWN. WHAT IS IT?

--until it's ***gone.***

CLARK? WHAT'S GOING ON?

IT'S DAD.

HE'S HAD A HEART ATTACK.

HE'S ***DEAD,*** LOIS.

He had cardiac sarcoidosis. A treatable condition, if anyone had bothered looking for it.

Even I was powerless to save him.

Speed, super-strength, x-ray vision. What good are ***they*** against the killers who dwell among us?

Against the monsters we fail to see... because they're with us ***every day?***

I KNOW YOU WEREN'T HAPPY WHEN I LEFT KANSAS.

I WENT OUT INTO THE WORLD TO DISCOVER WHO I WAS.

JONATHAN KENT. 1923-1962. PFC. ARMY. PACIFIC THEATER WORLD WAR II. BELOVED HUSBAND AND FATHER

BUT SOMEHOW, I ALWAYS FOUND MYSELF BACK AT HOME.

GOODBYE, DAD.

When you spend your life trying to save the world, it's easy to forget...

...that the world is always ending for someone.

However much or little time I had left, I now knew how I'd spend it.

Developing the superpower I'd always neglected. And, perhaps, the only one that truly mattered.

COMPUTER, CREATE A MODEL OF A HUMAN QUANTUM DNA SIGNATURE.

THIS IS KRYPTONIAN MEDICINE, MY SON. IT HAS NEVER BEEN USED TO TREAT OTHER SPECIES.

Trying to give the people of Earth what they'd given me--

--a **chance** at survival.

I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT, EVEN THOUGH EVERY INDICATION IS THAT THIS UNIVERSE WILL BE DESTROYED, AND SOON...

...I STILL ***BELIEVE*** IN OUR MISSION.

THAT IS WHY IT IS WITH A HEAVY HEART THAT I MUST ANNOUNCE MY ***RESIGNATION*** FROM THE JUSTICE LEAGUE.

WHAT?! ***WHY?***

AS A GUY IN A CAPE WHO CAN FLY AND DEFLECT BULLETS--AS WHAT PEOPLE HAVE COME TO CALL A ***SUPERHERO***--I'VE DONE ALL I CAN DO.

AND IT WASN'T ***NEARLY ENOUGH.***

IF I'M GOING TO HELP THE HUMAN RACE IN WHATEVER TIME WE HAVE LEFT... I NEED TO FIND ***ANOTHER WAY.***

PRETTY SURE THIS ISN'T WHAT BRUCE WAYNE HAD IN MIND WHEN HE BUILT THIS PLACE.

WHY DON'T YOU ASK HIM?

LOOK, I KNOW YOU SEE THE ***BEST*** IN PEOPLE.

I DON'T KNOW ***HOW,*** BUT YOU ***DO.*** BUT IF AND WHEN YOU EVER GET DISTRACTED...THINKING ABOUT EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE YOU ***CAN'T*** SAVE...DON'T FOCUS ON SAVING THE ***WORLD.*** JUST CONCENTRATE ON SAVING ONE ***PERSON.***

REMEMBER-- IT'S NOT ***HUMANITY*** THAT MATTERS...

...IT'S ***PEOPLE.***

WOULD IT BE WEIRD TO SAY THAT I'LL MISS YOU?

HUH? WHERE'D HE GO?

OH, HEY! SUPERMAN!

MY THERAPIST SUGGESTED THAT I START BUILDING THESE THINGS TO TEACH ME ***PATIENCE.*** TO SHOW MYSELF WHAT IT'S LIKE TO TAKE MY TIME WITH A PROJECT.

SO I THOUGHT I WOULD GIVE YOU THIS. YOU KNOW...AS A ***GOING-AWAY*** PRESENT.

THANKS. THIS MUST HAVE TAKEN YOU A LONG--

NO, NOT REALLY. THAT'S THE TENTH ONE I MADE TODAY.

ANYWAY, ***GOODBYE!***

I'M SORRY IF IT FEELS LIKE I'M LEAVING YOU IN THE LURCH, DIANA.

WE'LL GET BY.

NO OFFENSE, BUT THE JUSTICE LEAGUE WAS ALWAYS BIGGER THAN ONE MAN.

I KNOW. YOU'VE GOT MORE THAN ENOUGH HEROES HERE TO FIGHT FIRE WITH FIRE.

I DON'T KNOW WHO CAME UP WITH THAT SAYING, BUT I'M GUESSING IT WASN'T A FIREFIGHTER.

ONE THING I'VE ALWAYS ADMIRED ABOUT YOU, KAL-EL--

--IS THAT YOU ***DON'T*** FIGHT FIRE WITH FIRE.

YOU FIGHT DARKNESS WITH ***LIGHT.***

1984.

GOTHAM.

RULING BY DAY AS BRUCE WAYNE AND BY NIGHT AS THE BATMAN, CLEANING UP GOTHAM BECAME EASY.

AND WHEN SOMETHING BECOMES EASY--

--THAT'S WHEN YOU HAVE TO WORRY.

THUNK

WHAP

BECAUSE SUCCESS BREEDS IMITATORS. AND SLOPPINESS.

YOU LIKE BATS? HERE'S YER BATS!

HHHARRRRRRRRUUUUMMM

YOU PUT ON A MASK, TAKE OVER THE STREETS, AND SOON EVERYBODY THINKS THEY CAN DO IT.

HURM?

SSAWWIISSHH

WHAT IN THE--

NOT UNDERSTANDING--

--THAT YOU'RE A BILLIONAIRE WITH ACCESS TO CUTTING-EDGE MILITARY TECHNOLOGY--

--AND THEY'RE A PICKUP TEAM WHO WENT SHOPPING TOGETHER AT COSTUME CITY.

FFWHIT

STEEL CABLES?

THUDD

WHAT... WHAT'S *THAT?!*

A *MAGNET.*

HOPEFULLY NOBODY'S GOT A PLATE IN THEIR SKULL.

*BUT IT'S WHEN LIFE GETS **EASY** THAT IT REALLY STARTS TO GET DANGEROUS.*

DO YOU HAVE *ANY IDEA* WHO YOU'RE MESSING WITH?!

NO. BUT THAT'S OKAY.

AND WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW WON'T HURT YOU...

YOU'LL TELL ME.

...IT'LL KILL YOU.

WHEN YOU GET USED TO FIGHTING INFERIOR COMPETITION, YOU BEGIN TO DEVELOP **BAD HABITS.**

WHICH IS JUST ANOTHER WAY OF SAYING... THAT YOU'RE **UNPREPARED** FOR WHAT COMES NEXT.

INSERTING NEW IMAGE NOW.

THEY CALL IT **FACIAL RECOGNITION SOFTWARE.** WON'T BE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC FOR AT LEAST TWENTY YEARS.

ADD TO THE DATABASE OF KNOWN CRIMINALS IN GOTHAM.

THESE GUYS DON'T EVEN KNOW IT **EXISTS.**

IF THEY'RE IN COSTUME, THEY GET PICKED UP BY THE **BATMAN.** IF THEY'RE **NOT** IN COSTUME, THEY'RE PICKED UP BY **FACIAL RECOGNITION SOFTWARE.** THERE'S NOWHERE FOR THEM TO HIDE.

APPLY DATABASE TO ALL WAYNE ENTERPRISES SECURITY CAMERAS IN GOTHAM.

IT'S A FOOLPROOF SYSTEM, AS FAR AS SYSTEMS GO.

SO IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG FOR ME TO CLEAR THE ORCHARD OF ALL THE LOW-HANGING FRUIT.

BUT, AS ANY EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGIST WILL TELL YOU, IF YOU PICK ***ALL*** THE LOW-HANGING FRUIT...

...THE BRANCHES JUST GET ***HIGHER.***

I'M SORRY, BUT WAYNE ENTERPRISES IS A ***SECURE FACILITY.*** WITHOUT PROPER CREDENTIALS, WE CAN'T LET YOU GO UP TO THE EXECUTIVE LEVEL.

I UNDER-STAND.

CAN I HELP YOU, SIR?

YES. WELL. I'M...AH... LOOKING FOR THE ***DAYCARE.***

AND YOU ***ARE?***

I'M THE ***ENTERTAIN-MENT!***

TURNING WHAT YOU THOUGHT WERE YOUR ADVANTAGES--

FIFTH FLOOR.

THANK YOOOOOU!

--INTO ***LIABILITIES.***

METROPOLIS.

DAILY PLANET

LANE! GET IN HERE!

I GOT A BEEFY ASSIGNMENT FOR YOU!

WAIT. IT'S NOT *LITERALLY* BEEFY, IS IT? YOU'RE NOT SENDING ME TO A *SLAUGHTERHOUSE* OR SOMETHING...

WHAT?! *NO.* THAT'S WHAT *KENT* IS FOR!

DID I HEAR MY NAME?

LEX LUTHOR IS APPEALING.

THAT'S HIGHLY DEBATABLE, CHIEF.

HE'S APPEALING HIS *CONVICTION,* WISEACRE.

HOW IS THAT *POSSIBLE?!*

THAT'S WHAT I'M SENDING *YOU* TO FIND OUT!

AND I DON'T NEED ANY TEN-DOLLAR PULITZER BAIT, LANE. JUST BRING ME THE *MEAT AND POTATOES.*

WELL, THANKS FOR SETTING THE BAR *LOW,* CHIEF.

DON'T THANK ME. IT'S THE LOW BAR THAT PEOPLE TRIP OVER.

METROPOLIS FEDERAL COURTHOUSE.

I JUST COULDN'T FATHOM IT. A MAN WHO'D KILLED MILLIONS OF PEOPLE. WHO HAD CREATED UNTOLD MISERY.

HOW COULD THEY EVEN **CONSIDER** LETTING HIM GO?

THEY DON'T ALLOW PHOTOGRAPHERS IN THE COURTROOM, SO FIND A GOOD SPOT ON THE STEPS. GET A SHOT AS THEY LEAD HIM OUT OF THE COURTHOUSE.

WILL DO, MISS LANE. I MEAN...MRS. KENT.

I MEAN MISS LANE.

I DON'T KNOW WHEN, I DON'T KNOW HOW, BUT AT SOME POINT THIS COUNTRY **CHANGED.**

ALL RISE!

WE FORGOT THE LESSONS OF THE PAST. THE LESSONS IT TOOK A GREAT DEPRESSION AND TWO WORLD WARS TO LEARN.

THAT YOU CAN'T JUST **BUY** YOUR WAY OUT OF TROUBLE. THAT THE ONLY REAL JUSTIFICATION FOR CIVILIZATION IS IN HOW WELL WE TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER.

AFTER ALL, WHAT IS **ANY** OF THIS...THESE ROADS, THESE CITIES, THESE FARMS...

...IF NOT PROOF THAT WE **NEED** EACH OTHER?

NOT THAT I NEED TO READ THIS AMICUS BRIEF TO KNOW THIS...

...BUT YOUR CLIENT PARTICIPATED IN THE NUCLEAR ANNIHILATION OF ***TWO MILLION PEOPLE*** AND ALMOST SET OFF ***WORLD WAR THREE.***

SO ***WHY*** SHOULD I AGREE TO VACATE HIS CONVICTION?

YOUR HONOR, WHAT HAPPENED TO COAST CITY WAS A TERRIBLE ***ACCIDENT...***

FOR WHICH MY CLIENT BEARS ***NO*** RESPONSIBILITY.

COME AGAIN?

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ***LOANED*** MY CLIENT TWO NUCLEAR DEVICES TO BE USED IN A DEFENSE CONTRACT DEMONSTRATION. THE FACT THAT ONE DETONATED ACCIDENTALLY WHILE EN ROUTE...WELL, WHAT COULD BE TO BLAME OTHER THAN--

--GOVERNMENT INCOMPETENCE?

BUT SEEING AS HOW MR. LUTHOR IS ALREADY A RICH MAN, AND A ***PILLAR OF THE COMMUNITY,*** HE HAS AGREED NOT TO SUE THE STATE FOR FALSE IMPRISONMENT.

AND HOW DOES THE STATE FEEL ABOUT THIS?

THE STATE, UH, IT, UH...

THE STATE HAS NO OBJECTIONS, YOUR HONOR.

VERY WELL, THEN...

THE CONVICTION IS *VACATED.* MR. LUTHOR, YOU ARE FREE TO GO.

BANG

WE DID IT, BUDDY!

DON'T TOUCH ME.

WELCOME BACK, MR. LUTHOR.

LEXCORP

I SUPPOSE I SHOULD BE ***GRATEFUL*** FOR HOW YOU ALL KEPT THIS COMPANY GOING WHILE I WAS AWAY.

BUT, STRANGELY...

...I'M ***NOT.***

ANYHOO, ***DADDY'S BACK.***

SO WHADDYA GOT FOR ME?

KRYPTONITE, MR. LUTHOR.

WHAT'S A ***KRYPTONITE,*** OTIS?

IT'S SUPERMAN'S ***SECRET WEAKNESS.*** ONLY IT'S ***NOT*** SECRET. HE TOLD THE WORLD!

AND WE MANAGED TO ***GET*** SOME!

WHY?

WELL... TO ***DESTROY SUPERMAN.***

YOU KNOW...TO GET ***REVENGE.***

AND WHEN SHOULD I DO THAT, OTIS?

DURING *RECESS?*

ON THE PLAYGROUND BEFORE FIFTH PERIOD?

I'M SORRY, MR. LUTHOR. I JUST THOUGHT--

HOW MUCH IS THIS SUPERMAN GUY *WORTH,* ANYWAY?

LEXCORP HAS THE BEST OPPOSITION RESEARCH IN THE WORLD, AND YET WE COULD FIND NO CAPITAL OR ASSETS IN SUPERMAN'S PORTFOLIO.

OUR BEST GUESS--A NEGATIVE NET WORTH.

A *CHARITY CASE,* MR. LUTHOR.

CRIPES.

THE GUY'S ALREADY DESTROYED *HIMSELF.*

OKAY, THEN! FOR THE *ADULTS* IN THE ROOM... HERE'S WHAT I THINK.

IF LEXCORP IS TO FULFILL ITS *DESTINY...* IF WE ARE TO ACHIEVE FULL MARKET CAPITALIZATION... THEN THERE'S *ONE BIG STUMP* WE GOTTA GET OUTTA THE PEA PATCH...

CLICK

...WE NEED TO ACQUIRE *WAYNE ENTERPRISES.*

WAYN

ENTERPRI

OUR TOP STORY TONIGHT--

"WAYNE ENTERPRISES REJECTED A BUYOUT OFFER FROM LEXCORP."

WAYNE ENTERPRISES IS **NOT FOR SALE...**

...AND **WON'T BE** SO LONG AS I AM IN CHARGE.

A RARE **SETBACK** FOR LEXCORP, WHICH HAS SEEN ITS VALUE RISE CONSIDERABLY--

MR. LUTHOR? WOULD IT HELP TO THROW SOMETHING AT ME, SIR?

--SINCE THE EXONERATION AND RELEASE OF ITS CEO AND FOUNDER, **LEX LUTHOR.**

NEWS OF THE FAILED TAKEOVER CAUSED LEXCORP'S STOCK PRICE TO **DROP** THIRTEEN POINTS IN TRADING TODAY.

YOU WANTED TO SEE ME, MR. LUTHOR?

IN OTHER NEWS, A WORLD LOOKS UP TO THE SKIES AND WONDERS--

"--WHATEVER BECAME OF SUPERMAN?"

"IT'S BEEN **TWO YEARS** TO THE DAY SINCE THE WORLD'S GREATEST HERO WAS LAST SEEN IN PUBLIC, CAUSING MANY TO ASK THEMSELVES--

"--HAS HE **ABANDONED** US?"

IT'S ***FINISHED.***

WELL DONE, MY SON.

"AND, IF NOT, THEN WHAT HAS HE BEEN UP TO ALL THIS TIME?"

THANK YOU FOR COMING TODAY! I KNOW I'VE BEEN AWAY A LONG TIME.

THIS IS MY FIRST PRESS CONFERENCE AND, WITH ANY LUCK, MY ***LAST.***

USING MY LABORATORY AT THE FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE, I HAVE DISCOVERED A WAY TO ANALYZE THE ***QUANTUM DNA SIGNATURE*** OF EVERY HUMAN BEING ON EARTH.

IT'S LIKE A PRECISE SNAPSHOT OF WHO YOU WERE AT A SPECIFIC MOMENT IN TIME, FROM WHICH WE CAN EXTRAPOLATE WHAT YOUR BODY ***WILL*** DO.

"MEANING THAT IF SOMEONE GIVES ME A SAMPLE OF THEIR DNA, I CAN DIAGNOSE AND CURE EVERY DISEASE THEY HAVE...OR EVER ***WILL HAVE.***

"I CALL IT ***PROJECT HUMANITY.***

THIS TREATMENT COMES IN THE FORM OF A ONE-TIME CHEWABLE TABLET, WHICH CURES EVERY DISEASE ON EARTH.

AND, BEST OF ALL, IT'S COMPLETELY FREE OF CHARGE.

ANY QUESTIONS?

YEAH. *WHY?*

YOU COULD BE TAKING OUT TERRORISTS AND DRUG DEALERS. WHY *THIS?*

SOMETHING I'VE COME TO LEARN OVER THE LAST TWENTY YEARS--

--IS THAT WHILE SOMETIMES YOU'VE GOT TO GET ROUGH WITH PEOPLE...YOU DON'T HEAL THE WORLD WITH VIOLENCE.

YOU HEAL IT...WELL...BY *HEALING IT.*

RECENTLY, I LOST SOMEONE. SOMEONE CLOSE TO ME.

IT'S OKAY, CLARK.

"HE HAD SURVIVED THE FIGHTING IN THE PACIFIC. SURVIVED THE SINKING OF A SHIP. HE DIED NOT TOO LONG AGO. AND WHAT I LEARNED FROM HIM IS THAT, SOONER OR LATER...

"...*LIFE* IS A BATTLE THAT WE ALL LOSE.

WHICH IS WHY YOU CAN'T LIVE IT LIKE IT'S A *WAR.*

NEW MEXICO.

THESE CLINICS ARE GREAT.

GAVE ME A JOB WHEN I REALLY NEEDED ONE. HELPED ME TURN MY LIFE AROUND.

I JUST NEED TO TAKE A SAMPLE OF YOUR DNA, DEAR.

THIS WILL JUST TAKE A SECOND. WE'LL PROCESS THE RESULTS AT THE LAB.

YOUR TABLET SHOULD ARRIVE IN A COUPLE OF WEEKS.

DO I NEED TO TAKE IT WITH WATER?

NOPE! YOU JUST EAT IT ***WHOLE.*** I'M TOLD IT TASTES LIKE ROOT BEER.

ANYTHING ELSE?

YES--

--***THANK YOU.***

AND NOW, FRESH FROM HIS *TWENTY-YEAR SABBATICAL,* I'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE YOUR HOST...

LEXCORP

...LEX LUTHOR!

CLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAP

THANK YOU. IT'S NICE TO BE HERE.

BUT THEN...IT'S NICE TO BE *ANYPLACE* WHERE THE WINE WASN'T MADE IN A SOCK.

HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA

BUT I'M NOT HERE TO TALK ABOUT PRISON CUISINE.

I'M HERE TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERS.

I'M HERE TO TALK TO YOU... ABOUT *YOU.*

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?! WHY DO YOU SHOW UP TO WORK EVERY MORNING?

I MEAN, IT'S FOR THE *MONEY,* RIGHT?

MONEY!

WOOHOO!

WRONG.

HUMAN BEINGS GOT BY JUST FINE FOR HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF YEARS BEFORE THERE WAS ANY SUCH THING AS *MONEY.*

YOU COULD, TOO.

THE THING THEY *COULDN'T* LIVE WITHOUT...THE THING THAT HAS GOTTEN US UP IN THE MORNING AND OUT THE CAVE DOOR SINCE THE VERY BEGINNING... WASN'T MONEY.

IT WAS *WINNING.*

"WE DESIGN NEW WEAPONS TO BEAT THE PEOPLE ARMED WITH THE OLD WEAPONS.

"EVERY ANIMAL PELT WE WORE, EVERY FIGHT WE WON, EVERY TIME WE PASSED ON OUR GENES TO A NEW CHILD...THEY ALL STOOD IN NAKED TESTAMENT TO THE *SAME* THING--

--THAT WE'D *WON.*

'PROOF TO WHOEVER DROPPED US ON THIS PLANET AND FOR WHATEVER REASON...THAT WE *DESERVE* TO BE HERE.

MONEY IS SIMPLY HOW WE KEEP SCORE.

I MEAN, NOW THAT WE CAN'T KILL PEOPLE.

NOT WITH A *SPEAR,* ANYWAY.

HAHA HAHA HAHAHAHA HAHAHAHA

WHERE MY HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AT?

UH-HUH. ANY *PHARMACEUTICALS* IN THE HOUSE?

OVER HERE!

WELL, IT WAS NICE KNOWIN' YA!

SUPERMAN JUST PUT YOU ALL OUT OF BUSINESS! HE'S COME OUT WITH A PILL THAT CURES EVERY DISEASE IMAGINABLE.

THIS GUY *WON* WITHOUT EVEN *TRYING.*

SO, WHAT DOES THAT SAY ABOUT *YOU?!*

SMALLVILLE, KANSAS.

I NEVER REALIZED HOW QUIET THIS PLACE COULD BE UNTIL JONATHAN DIED.

CAN I ASK? HOW ARE YOU HOLDING UP?

WHO SAYS I AM?

YOU COULD MOVE IN WITH *US,* YOU KNOW?

AT THE FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE. BELIEVE ME WHEN I SAY THERE'S *PLENTY* OF ROOM.

AND THE VIEW IS PRACTICALLY THE SAME.

MY GOD. JUST MILES AND MILES OF *NOTHING.*

AT MY AGE... THAT'S PRETTY MUCH THE VIEW FROM *EVERYWHERE.*

I MISS GRANDPA.

I DO, TOO. BUT IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO SHUCK CORN WITHOUT FEELING LIKE HE'S SOMEWHERE NEARBY.

JUDGING ME.

BUT *YOU'RE* NOT GOING TO DIE, RIGHT? I MEAN...YOU'RE *IMMORTAL.*

THERE'S NO SUCH THING, SON.

EVERYTHING THAT HAD A BEGINNING WILL, BY DEFINITION, COME TO AN *END.*

THE DAY COMES FOR ALL OF US WHEN YOU LEAVE BEHIND THE THINGS YOU LOVE.

WHICH IS BOTH DEATH'S *TRAGEDY...*

...AND ITS *PROMISE.*

GOTHAM.

O'HARA'S Electrical

O'HARA'S Electrical

AUTHORITIES ARE CALLING IT THE PIED PIPER KIDNAPPING.

THE KIDNAPPER, DRESSED AS A CLOWN, MADE OFF WITH **SEVEN VICTIMS,** ALL CHILDREN OF WAYNE ENTERPRISES EXECUTIVES.

WE SPOKE TO WAYNE ENTERPRISES CEO BRUCE WAYNE.

COMMISSIONER GORDON ASSURES ME THE POLICE ARE DOING ALL THEY CAN TO LOCATE THE CHILDREN.

AS FOR OUR PART, WAYNE ENTERPRISES IS OFFERING...

...A TEN-THOUSAND-DOLLAR REWARD FOR ANY INFORMATION THAT LEADS TO THE RETURN OF THE CHILDREN.

TEN... *THOUSAND?*

YA *HEAR THAT,* KIDS?!

YOUR LIVES ARE WORTH ABOUT WHAT HE BETS ON A ROUND OF *GOLF.*

I KNOW, RIGHT?!

WHAT A *CHEAPSKATE!*

"THE *CLOWN* IS ALL OVER WAYNE SECURITY CAMERAS.

"THERE'S MORE FOOTAGE OF HIM THAN THERE IS OF THE *MOON LANDING.*

"AND YET, BECAUSE OF HIS MAKEUP, I CAN'T MATCH HIM WITH ANYONE IN THE DATABASE.

NO MATCH

GOTHAM CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

"IT CAN'T EVEN GIVE ME A LIST OF LIKELY MATCHES. IT'S AS IF HE *KNOWS* I HAVE THIS TECHNOLOGY.

"AS IF HE *KNEW* I'D BE LOOKING FOR HIM."

RRRRRRRIIIINNNNG

WHO'S THIS?

HELLLLOOO. I'M SELLING ***CHILD-SIZED COFFINS.*** *I HEARD YOU MIGHT BE IN THE MARKET. THEY'RE PINE SCENTED, SPACIOUS--*

PLEASE DON'T INTERRUPT ME. I'M ONLY GOING TO SAY THIS ONCE.

WHO *ARE* YOU? WHAT DO YOU *WANT?!*

YEARS EARLIER...

"SPEAKING OF CHILDREN...

"I WANT TO TELL YOU THE STORY OF A CHILD. A YOUNG GIRL WHO HAD THE REMARKABLY POOR LUCK OF BEING THE DAUGHTER OF A *PART-TIME CLOWN.*"

TABITHA?

"AND THE *EVEN WORSE* LUCK OF LIVING IN THE ONLY PLACE THAT CLOWN COULD AFFORD. A TENEMENT SLUM... OR, TO BE MORE ACCURATE, AN *ENORMOUS INSURANCE SCAM* KNOWN TO ITS TENANTS AS A *DEATH TRAP,* BUT TO THE REST OF THE WORLD AS...

"...WAYNE TOWERS."

"AN *ARSON.* THE RANDOM ACT OF PUNKS, THE POLICE SAID. BUT EVERYBODY KNEW IT HAD BEEN *TORCHED,* LIKE ALL THE OTHER LOW-RENT TENEMENTS IN THE CITY, FOR THE *INSURANCE MONEY.*"

TABITHA!

WHOA, MISTER!

"THOUGH NOBODY COULD *PROVE* ANYTHING.

STOP! ARE YOU NUTS?!

"I WENT IN. TO SAVE HER.

"BUT I DIDN'T STAY FOR LONG. IT WAS TOO HOT. NOTHING TRIGGERS YOUR SURVIVAL INSTINCTS QUITE LIKE *FIRE.* SO I LEFT. I LEFT MY DAUGHTER TO *DIE.*"

WE GOT A *SURVIVOR.* COVERED IN BURNS. CONTACT CRITICAL CARE.

"WE ALL LIKE TO IMAGINE OURSELVES AS HEROES, BUT MOST OF US ARE JUST *COCKROACHES.* POWERLESS AGAINST OUR OWN GRUBBY WILL TO *SURVIVE.*

WHEN YOU HOPE THAT YOUR CHILD DIED OF SMOKE INHALATION INSTEAD OF BURNING ALIVE...

...WELL, LET'S JUST SAY IT CHANGES THE WAY YOU DEFINE *HOPE.*

IF *YOU* HAD LOST SOMEONE YOU LOVE LIKE THAT...

...DO YOU HAVE *ANY IDEA* WHAT YOU'D WANT TO DO TO THOSE *RESPONSIBLE?*

BLIPPP

YES.

I THINK I *DO.*

I'M *LISTENING.*

WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

"I GUESS I JUST WANT YOU TO UNDERSTAND WHAT PEOPLE LIKE ME HAVE *ALWAYS* KNOWN...

"THAT *LIFE...*

"...IS JUST A FOUR-LETTER WORD...

"...FOR *CONSEQUENCES.*"

Locating source of call...

BLIPPP

Head northeast. Three blocks.

"THOUGH I SUPPOSE THE TERM *INSURANCE SCAM* IS A TAD *REDUNDANT.*"

Location of call... directly below. Street level.

"A WAY OF TURNING YOUR *MISTAKE*... EVEN AN *ACT OF GOD*...INTO A *WIN.* A WAY TO AVOID *CONSEQUENCES.*

"BUT, DESPITE WHAT YOUR *ACCOUNTANTS* MAY HAVE TOLD YOU..."

...WHEN YOU'VE CROSSED ENOUGH LINES... WHEN YOU'VE HURT ENOUGH PEOPLE...

phone

...THERE IS NO LONGER ANY SUCH THING AS **INSURANCE.**

LUCIUS?!

ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, YOU'LL **PAY.**

I **HAD** TO.

HE...HE HAS MY **SON.**

phone

AND NO **ACT OF GOD** WILL SAVE YOU.

KABOOM

phone

I WENT OUT THAT NIGHT, AND EVERY NIGHT AFTER, LOOKING FOR THE CLOWN.

COULDN'T FIND HIM.

WHERE IS HE?!

I DON'T KNOW! NOBODY DOES!

HE JUST GETS IN TOUCH WHEN HE NEEDS US!

I SUPPOSE THAT'S ONE OF THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING NOBODY. OF HAVING NOTHING.

NO FAMILY. NO HOME. A MAN WITH NOTHING TO LOSE IS A MAN WITH NOTHING TO FEAR.

BUT EVERYONE WANTS SOMETHING.

RRRRRRRRRIIIINNNNNG

AND IT'S JUST A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THEY COME LOOKING FOR IT.

BECAUSE, IN THE END, WE ARE WHAT WE WANT.

HE TOLD ME THAT IF I BROUGHT HIM A MILLION DOLLARS, HE'D LET THE CHILDREN GO.

COME ALONE.

AND, TECHNICALLY, YOU ALSO OWE ME THE TEN GRAND FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR WHEREABOUTS, MONEYBAGS.

WE WEAR MASKS TO CONCEAL OURSELVES FROM THE WORLD.

I THINK THIS SETTING IS MORE *APPROPRIATE.* DON'T YOU?

SO, AH, DID YOU BRING THE *MONEY?*

BUT NOTHING MAKES US DISAPPEAR, HIDES US, BETTER...

...THAN SIMPLY PRETENDING TO WANT WHAT EVERYONE ELSE DOES.

I DIDN'T THINK IT WAS ABOUT THE MONEY FOR *YOU.*

NO.

BUT IT IS FOR YOU.

WEARING A MASK MAKES YOU FEEL SOMEHOW MORE *MYSTERIOUS,* AND YET BETTER **UNDERSTOOD.**

THE POLICE FOLLOWED ME HERE, YOU KNOW.

I KNOW.

BY NOW THEY'VE GOT SNIPERS POSTED. WITH ORDERS TO SHOOT THE FIRST CLOWN THEY SEE.

YOU WEAR A MASK SO THAT YOU CAN TAKE IT **OFF.** SO YOU CAN LEAD WHAT YOU IMAGINE IS YOUR **REAL** LIFE.

NOT REALIZING THAT YOU'RE **ALWAYS** WEARING A MASK.

I FIGURED AS MUCH. YOU LIKE THE *MASK?*

WAYNE

HAHAHAH

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THERE?

AHAHAHAHAHAHAHA

YOU GOT A SHOT AT THE CLOWN?

UH...

...I AIN'T SURE *WHAT* I GOT.

I'VE LOST THEM!

AHHH...THAT FEELS *BETTER.* HOW DO YOU STAND WEARING THAT FACE?

YOU A *RELIGIOUS MAN,* MR. WAYNE? YOU LOOK LIKE A RELIGIOUS MAN.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE *WORLD'S LARGEST RELIGION* IS?

NO. WHAT IS IT?

YOU'RE *LOOKING* AT IT.

PEOPLE WHO WOULD NORMALLY *LEAVE TOWN* TO AVOID LIVING NEXT TO EACH OTHER... PEOPLE WHO WOULD BLOW UP EACH OTHER'S TEMPLES AS SOON AS SAY *HELLO...*

THEY *ALL* WORSHIP THE SAME SILLY LITTLE PAPERS...FILLED WITH PYRAMIDS AND LITTLE FLOATING EYEBALLS AND, *GOD,* WHAT *IS* ALL THIS *STUFF?*

FLIK

WHOEVER THEY PRAY TO THE ONE DAY A WEEK THEY GO TO CHURCH... THESE SQUIRRELLY PAPERS GET THE OTHER *SIX.*

EACH ONE OF THESE BILLS... A PRAYER TO A *FALSE GOD.*

AND *YOU...* THEIR HIGH PRIEST.

YOU'VE GOT WHAT YOU *WANT,* THEN.

LET THE KIDS GO. I'LL STAY HERE WITH YOU.

YOU CAN'T *BARGAIN* WITH SOME-THING YOU'VE *ALREADY* GIVEN ME.

I MEAN...AH... WHAT KIND OF *BUSINESSMAN* ARE YOU?

OH, I'M SORRY. ARE YOU DISTRACTED BY THE BURNING MILLION DOLLARS?

NOTHING CAUSES YOUR SURVIVAL INSTINCTS TO *KICK IN* QUITE LIKE *FIRE.*

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THERE?!

I DON'T KNOW!

BUT SOMETHING'S *BURNING.*

IF I *KILL YOU,* THEY...AH...JUST REPLACE YOU WITH ANOTHER BOSS.

IF I KILL THE *BOARD OF DIRECTORS...* THEY JUST GET REPLACED WITH *OTHER* BISHOPS FROM THE CHURCH OF THE FUNNY PAPERS.

SO I THINK I NEED TO HOLD ON TO THE KIDDOS A WHILE LONGER.

YOU PROMISED YOU'D LET THEM *GO!*

CONSIDER THIS A *RENEGOTIATED CONTRACT.* EVERY TIME WAYNE ENTERPRISES MAKES A DECISION THAT COSTS THE LIVES OF OTHERS' CHILDREN, ONE OF THEIR OWN CHILDREN *DIES.*

WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?!

TO SEE IF MAYBE...JUST *PERHAPS...*

...THERE'S STILL *SOMETHING* MORE IMPORTANT TO THEM THAN *MONEY.*

YOU WON'T MAKE IT OUT OF THIS BUILDING *ALIVE.*

THEY'LL *KILL* YOU.

NO, THEY *WON'T.*

THEY KNOW THEY *HAVE TO* IF THEY WANT TO SAVE THE LIVES OF SOME MEASLY *CHILDREN.* BUT THEY *WON'T.*

AND *WHY?* BECAUSE THEY THINK I MIGHT BE *YOU.* THE *HIGH PRIEST...*

...OF THE ONLY GOD THEY KNOW FOR SURE IS *REAL.*

OF COURSE, HE WAS RIGHT.

NOW *GO.*

TELL THEM.

*THEY WON'T STOP HIM UNLESS THEY **HAVE TO.** UNLESS THEY KNOW **FOR SURE** THEY'VE GOT THE CLOWN.*

HUH?! UHNNFF!

CLOWN!

THE TROLLEY IS COMING. WHAT DO YOU DO?

AHAHAHAHA

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

CEASE FIRE!

CEASE FIRE! HE'S GOT MR. WAYNE!

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

YOU DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO DENY THEM WHAT THEY WANTED.

EVEN IF IT MEANS LETTING AN INNOCENT PERSON DIE.

BECAUSE IN THE END... NO ONE IS INNOCENT.

HA! HA!

HA... HA... HA...

BECAUSE IN THE END...THAT'S WHAT SAVES LIVES.

METROPOLIS. 1985.

BAR The SEAGULL

SHOE STORE

JOE'S Repairs Cleaning

OH, IT'S *YOU.*

COME TO GLOAT, I SUPPOSE.

IS THAT WHAT YOU THINK I'VE BEEN DOING ON THIS UNEVEN BARSTOOL FOR THE PAST *TWENTY YEARS?* GLOATING?

I'M NOT *GLOATING.*

MILK, PLEASE.

I CAME TO TELL YOU...

...THAT THIS IS *THE DAY.* THE DAY IT ALL ENDS.

I was shocked. But perhaps shocked was the wrong word for it. I had long known this day was coming--I'd just hoped it never would.

Hope being the castle we usually die in.

I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU'RE HERE TO *HELP,* ARE YOU?

NOPE. THIS IS *THE END,* KID.

AND WHAT IS THERE TO SAY AT THE END...

...BUT "I'M SORRY"?

JUST MONTHS AFTER THE TRAGIC AND UNTIMELY DEATH OF ITS CEO, THE BOARD OF WAYNE ENTERPRISES HAS AGREED TO SELL BRUCE WAYNE'S SHARES TO **LEXCORP...**

...MAKING LEXCORP THE BIGGEST CORPORATION IN THE WORLD.

AND *SCENE.*

CLICK

CLAPCLAPCLAPCLAPCLAP

CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP

HOW'D YOU DO IT, MR. LUTHOR? YOU HAVE A MAN ON THE *INSIDE?*

NO. A MAN ON THE *OUTSIDE.*

"I SIMPLY FED HIM *INFORMATION.* AND *CASH.*

POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

"HE WAS MOTIVATED ENOUGH TO DO THE REST ON HIS OWN."

IS THIS WHAT *VINDICATION* FEELS LIKE?

TO, IN ONE FELL SWOOP, NOT ONLY ELIMINATE A *BUSINESS RIVAL...*

...BUT WIN A BATTLE *DECADES* IN THE MAKING?!

FWIISSH

WAYNE ENTERPRISES Defense Bid 1963

"WE SPENT YEARS SCOOPING UP PHARMACEUTICALS ON THE CHEAP WHILE SUPERMAN WAS DRIVING THEM OUT OF BUSINESS...

"...NOW ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS PAY A FEW CONGRESSMEN TO MAKE HIS CREEPY LITTLE DNA COLLECTIONS ILLEGAL

AND, THANKS TO *MY LEADERSHIP,* THE WORLD WILL SOON DEPEND ON LEXCORP™ FOR ITS VERY SURVIVAL!

NO COMPANY WILL *EVER AGAIN* BE ABLE TO CHALLENGE LEXCORP!

IN JUST *THREE YEARS,* I'VE GONE FROM *PRISON* TO THE TOP OF THE *FORTUNE 500!*

YOU DONE GOOD, MR. LUTHOR.

DON'T STEP ON MY LINES.

THIS IS THE HAPPIEST DAY OF MY LIFE...

BY GOD... I'VE *DONE IT!* ALL MY HARD WORK. ALL MY *SUFFERING.* I'VE ACHIEVED ALL MY DREAMS.

I'VE WON. DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?

I'VE *WON!*

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE *SKY?*

MEANWHILE, AT THE HALL OF JUSTICE...

THE ANTI-MONITOR HAS COMPLETELY DRAINED THIS UNIVERSE OF ANTIMATTER.

THE SINGULARITY COLLAPSE HAS ALREADY BEGUN. THIS PLANET COULD BE CRUSHED INTO COSMIC DUST AT ANY MOMENT.

AWWW. AND I WAS ALMOST *FINISHED.*

WAIT. WHERE'S BATMAN?

SO, THIS IS *IT?*

WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "WHAT DO WE DO?"

WE MADE THAT DECISION THE DAY WE ENTERED THIS PLACE.

I have just one move left. The last I will ever make.

THE FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE. NORTH POLE.

COMPUTER, PREPARE MEMORY CRYSTAL OF QUANTUM DNA SIGNATURES.

SPECIFY. QUANTUM DNA SIGNATURES OF WHOM?

OF *EVERYONE.*

I had collected the quantum DNA of billions of people and was preparing to compress it all into a single data crystal.

As much of humanity as possible, shrunk down inside a piece of glass.

Everything the world was, or ever would be, contained in this one capsule.

I'm too embarrassed to tell you where I got the idea for this.

DATA TRANSFER ENGAGED.

JOURNAL

To Clark, From Mom

Farewell, human race. And thank you.

For **everything.**

WASHINGTON, D.C.

This, like all our previous efforts to save the human race, is probably doomed.

FIZZAAAASH

THIS IS *HOPELESS!*

IT DOESN'T MATTER! KEEP *TRYING!*

RELAX

But then again, we don't do what we do because we expect it to work.

We do it because it's who we are.

FZZZAAAASH

KEEP...

...TRYING...

JOHN!

WE'RE TRAPPED!

I'M COMING!

We came from different backgrounds
Some of us from different worlds.

As we all stand at the edge of the abyss--

OLIVER!

--it's easy to look down, forgetting--

KUH-THUNK

--that what's important is not the abyss--

HELP!

I'M HERE!

I'LL HOLD IT BACK AS LONG AS I CAN

WHATEVER HAPPENS, I'VE GOT YOU. OKAY?

--but that we stood there *together.*

METROPOLIS.

THE DAILY PLANET

According to Kryptonian physics, the universe is a four-dimensional object. A single porous object, existing as it always has and always will.

Time is merely a useful illusion. A by-product of our minds. Time exists to simplify the universe to the point that we can experience it.

But time, along with the dimensions of space, is simply the ***limitation*** of existence, not an ***end*** to it.

Just because there are miles of empty space above your head, that doesn't mean you cease to ***exist*** when I look at the stars above you.

When I look to the horizon beyond you, it doesn't mean that you cease to exist because I don't see you there.

You, me, and everyone we know--we are all permanent residents in the four-dimensional object we call the universe.

So it is with ***time.***

Just because you're only here for a short time, that doesn't mean you're ***gone.***

It just means that I am experiencing the parts of time where you aren't.

Eternal and indispensable.

If time is an illusion, then death must be as well.

COMPUTER... COMPLETE DATA TRANSFER, NOW.

INSUFFICIENT POWER TO COMPLY WITH REQUEST.

A side effect of the limits of our perception.

YOU'RE TRYING TO COMPRESS THE QUANTUM DNA SIGNATURES OF **BILLIONS** OF PEOPLE, KAL-EL. THE COMPUTER HAS NEVER HAD TO PROCESS A REQUEST THAT LARGE BEFORE.

BUT... I WAS SO **CLOSE.** SURELY THIS ISN'T THE WAY IT WAS MEANT TO END.

THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO FREE UP THE AMOUNT OF POWER NECESSARY.

COMPUTER, END HOLOGRAPHIC SIMULATION KNOWN AS JOR-EL.

DELETE ALL FILES.

REQUEST GRANTED.

FATHER, WAIT!

YOU'VE BECOME EVERYTHING I'D HOPED YOU WOULD, KAL-EL.

PLEASE. NO!

YOU DID FOR YOUR WORLD WHAT I COULD NOT FOR

Death is an illusion.

But the pain of losing you is real.

KAFOOOM!

DON'T LOOK BACK.

Braniac has given me coordinates for an escape portal from this universe, should I change my mind. Should I decide to join him.

Should I choose to abandon the doomed world that has become my home.

UNIVERSE 203495-B IS COLLAPSING. DO YOU BELIEVE THE KRYPTONIAN WILL JOIN US?

UNCERTAIN. THOUGH I PROJECT A 62.7436 PERCENT CHANCE THAT HE WILL.

Should I choose to abandon the human race and all it's meant to me.

So before I end this journal, I'd like to add a few brief notes about how you came to be reading it.

If, in fact, someone ever does.

Brainiac promised to keep the portal to the other universe open long enough for one being to cross through.

And Brainiac is nothing if not reliable.

Nothing if not a survivor.

His only mistake being the assumption...

...that I must be, too.

UNIVERSE 832654-Z.

SOMETHING IS ENTERING THE PORTAL.

AH, GOOD! HERE HE COMES.

AS PREDICTED.

I PROJECT A 99.98875 PERCENT CHANCE THAT WE WERE PREMATURE IN OUR OPTIMISM.

THAT'S IT, I SUPPOSE.

THE KRYPTONIAN IS SEALED IN THAT UNIVERSE FOREVER.

YES. QUITE DOOMED.

DO YOU SUPPOSE WE SHOULD DESTROY THAT?

MY CALCULATIONS SHOW THAT ITS PRESENCE HERE INCREASES THE **CHAOS FACTOR** OF THE COMING BATTLE WITH THE ANTI-MONITOR BY 5.2163 PERCENT.

I'LL TAKE THOSE ODDS.

COME. THERE ARE OTHER UNIVERSES TO ATTEND TO.

EARTH. UNIVERSE 832654-Z.

CLARK. YOUR NAME IS CLARK. YOUR MOTHER IS MARTHA. YOUR FATHER IS--

HUH?

WHAT *IS* THAT?

C'MERE!

IT'S *KRYPTONIAN TECHNOLOGY...* BUT HOW?

C'MON. LET'S GET YOU INSIDE.

I don't know who, if anyone, is reading this journal.

But if someone is reading it, it is probably your universe's version of me.

JOURNAL
To Clark, from Mom

I know that your planet has been destroyed. So if you stuck around, I can only guess that hope is what kept you here.

I have sent this capsule to the North Pole of your world in the belief that, if you are still there, that is where you'd be.

The enclosed memory crystal contains the quantum DNA signatures of as many human beings as I could get. From every corner of the Earth.

This will allow you to recreate everyone recorded on the crystal as they were at the moment I received their quantum DNA.

I made it my life's work to save these people. To save what I could of the world that took me in.

CLARK?! WHAT'S HAPPENING?!

THIS IS GOING TO REQUIRE SOME EXPLANATION.

I have little hope that this plan will succeed.

But then, sometimes...

...hope is the lie we make come true.

THE FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE.

In the end, everything is not as it was meant to be. Everything will not be all right.

RRRRR

BOOM

DATA MODULE MISSING! FORTRESS INTEGRITY COMPROMISED!

DEACTIVATE ALARMS, COMPUTER.

DIVERT ANY REMAINING ENERGY TO THE LIVING QUARTERS.

CLARK, IT'S HAPPENING!

And that's okay.

I LOVE YOU BOTH SO MUCH.

KABOOO

Lois once asked me what it means to be a hero.

And I'm not sure I ever really came up with a good answer for that.

But the best one I could come up with--

GOOD-BYE.

I DID THE BEST I COULD DO.

--is that a hero is someone who never thinks about how much they mean to the world--

--but realizes just how much the world means to them.

EARTH. UNIVERSE 832654-Z.

If, by some miracle, you are reading this...

...and this gambit somehow succeeds...

...say hi to Mom for me.

And tell Lois and Jonathan I love them

IN MEMORY OF A FRIEND

I DON'T GET IT. YOU'RE STILL ***HERE,*** SUPERMAN.

YES.

I SUPPOSE I AM.

Sometimes you save the world. Sometimes the world saves you.

As Dad once told me, there's a part of ourselves that's out there, loose in the world, waiting to be discovered. And he was right.

WHAT KIND OF MANIAC BUILDS A STATUE OF HIMSELF?

THAT'S NOT ME.

IN MEMORY OF A FRIEND

And that part is what we call *love*.

THE END.

Superman: Space Age #1
variant cover by **MICHAEL ALLRED**

Superman: Space Age #1
variant cover by **NICK DERINGTON**

Superman: Space Age #1
Variant Cover by **STEVE RUDE**

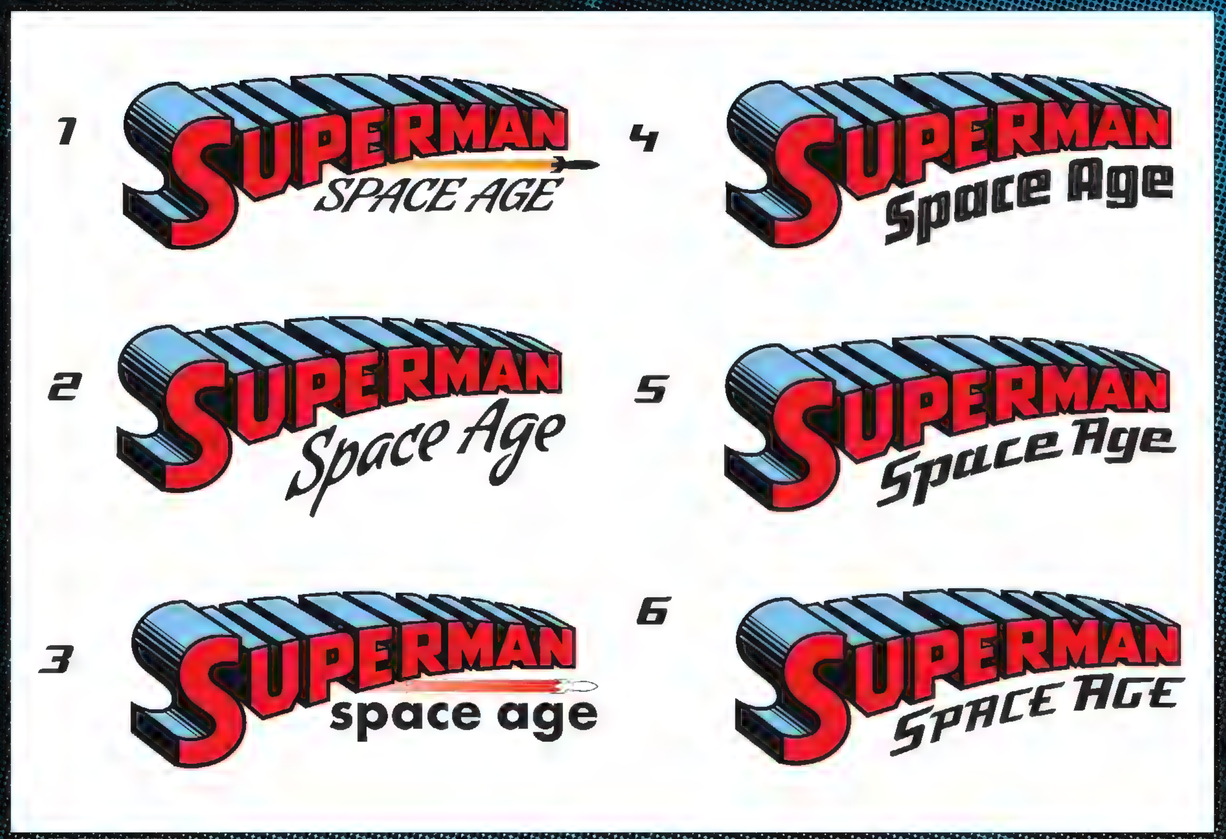
Superman: Space Age #2
variant cover by **NICK DERINGTON**

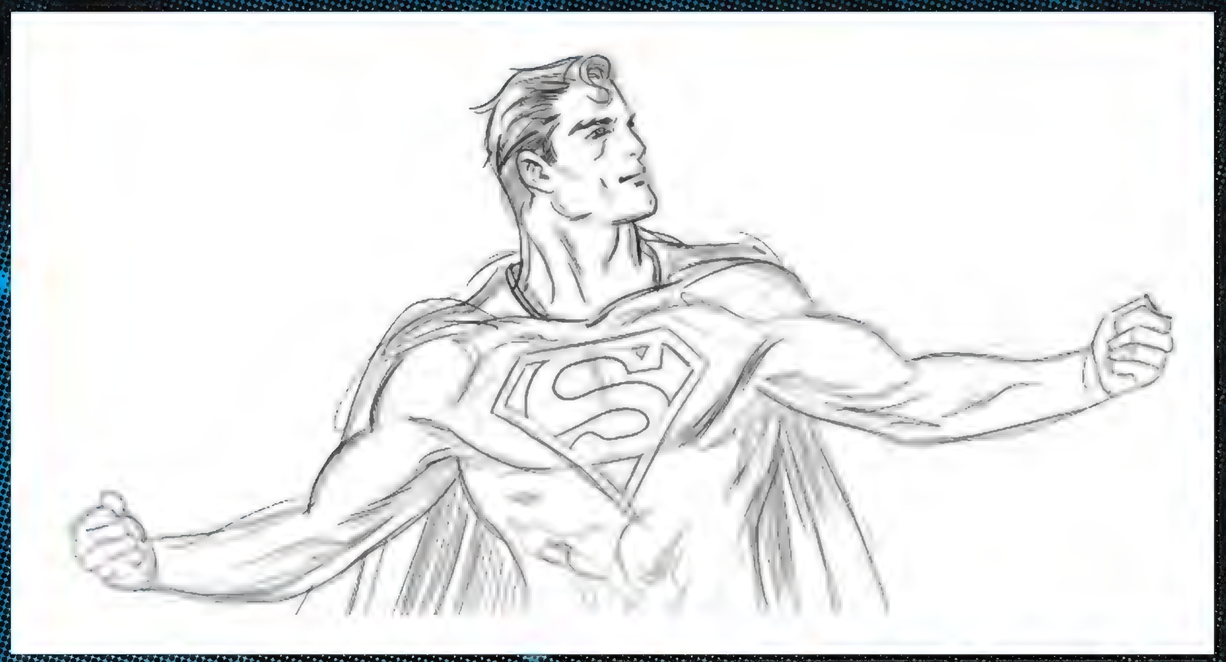
Superman: Space Age #2
variant cover by **DAVE JOHNSON**

Superman: Space Age #3
variant cover by **NICK DERINGTON**

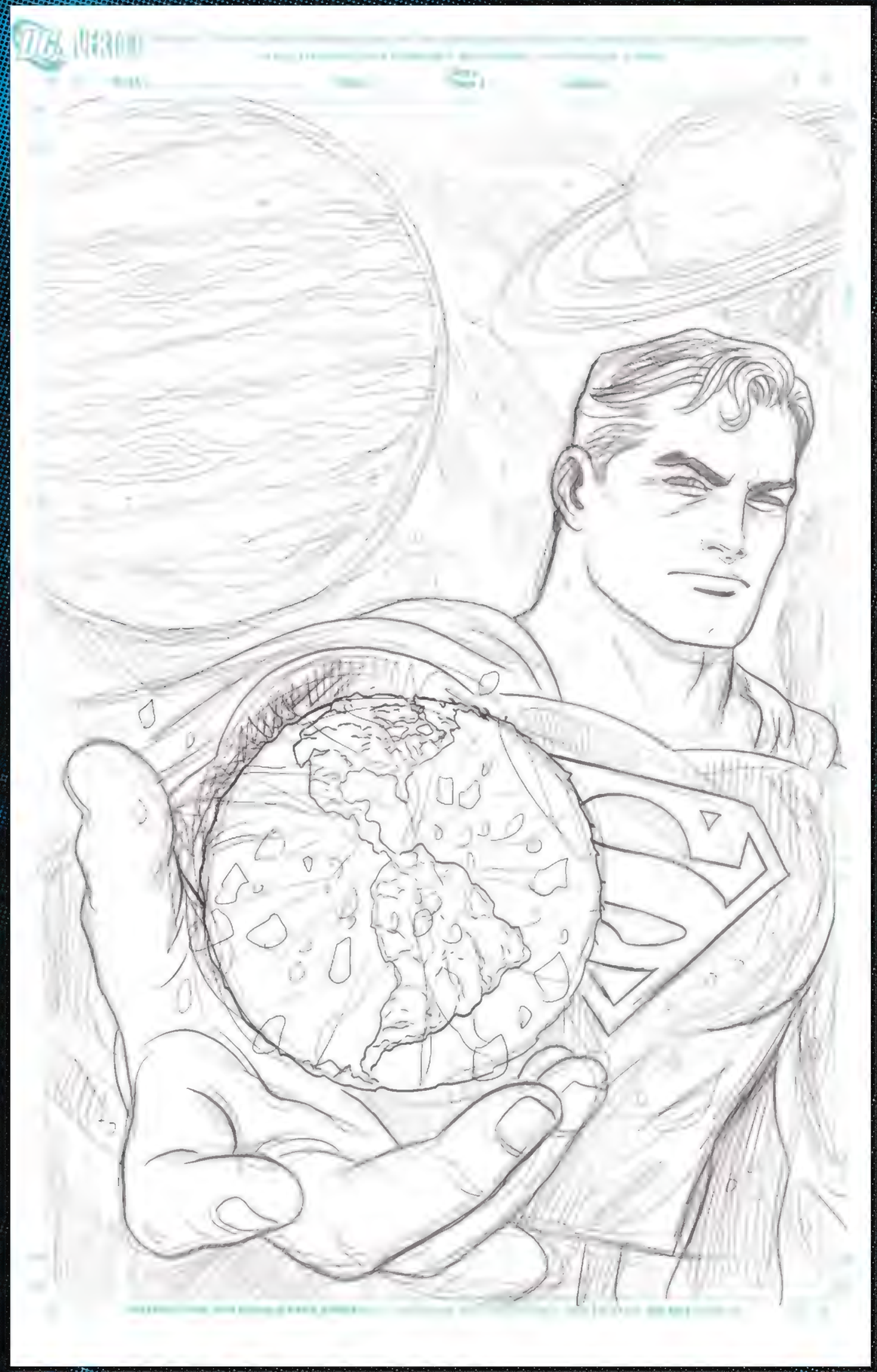
Superman: Space Age #3
variant cover by **JOE QUINONES**

Superman: Space Age logo designs

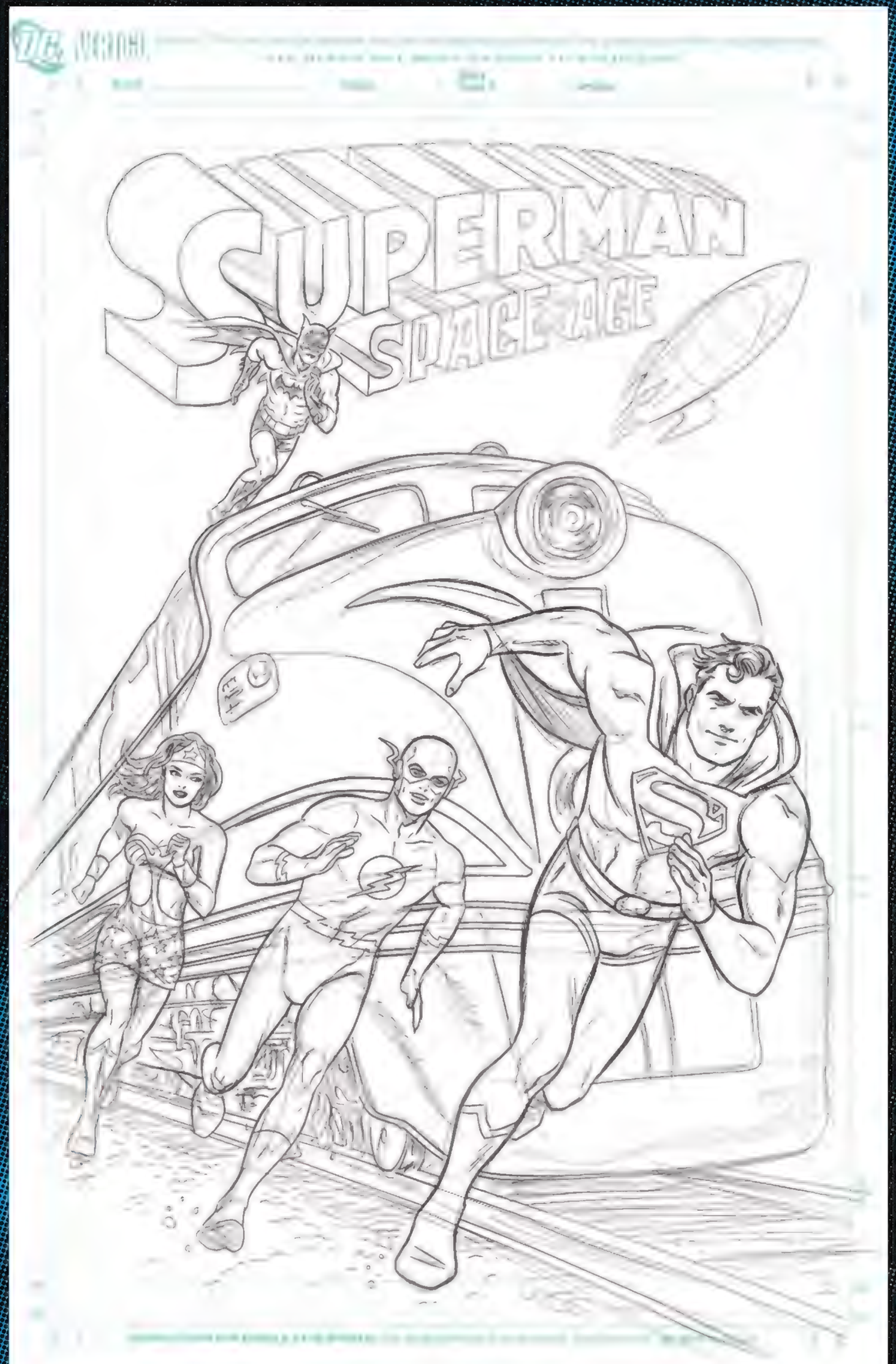




Superman study by **MICHAEL ALLRED**



Superman: Space Age #1 cover pencils by **MICHAEL ALLRED**



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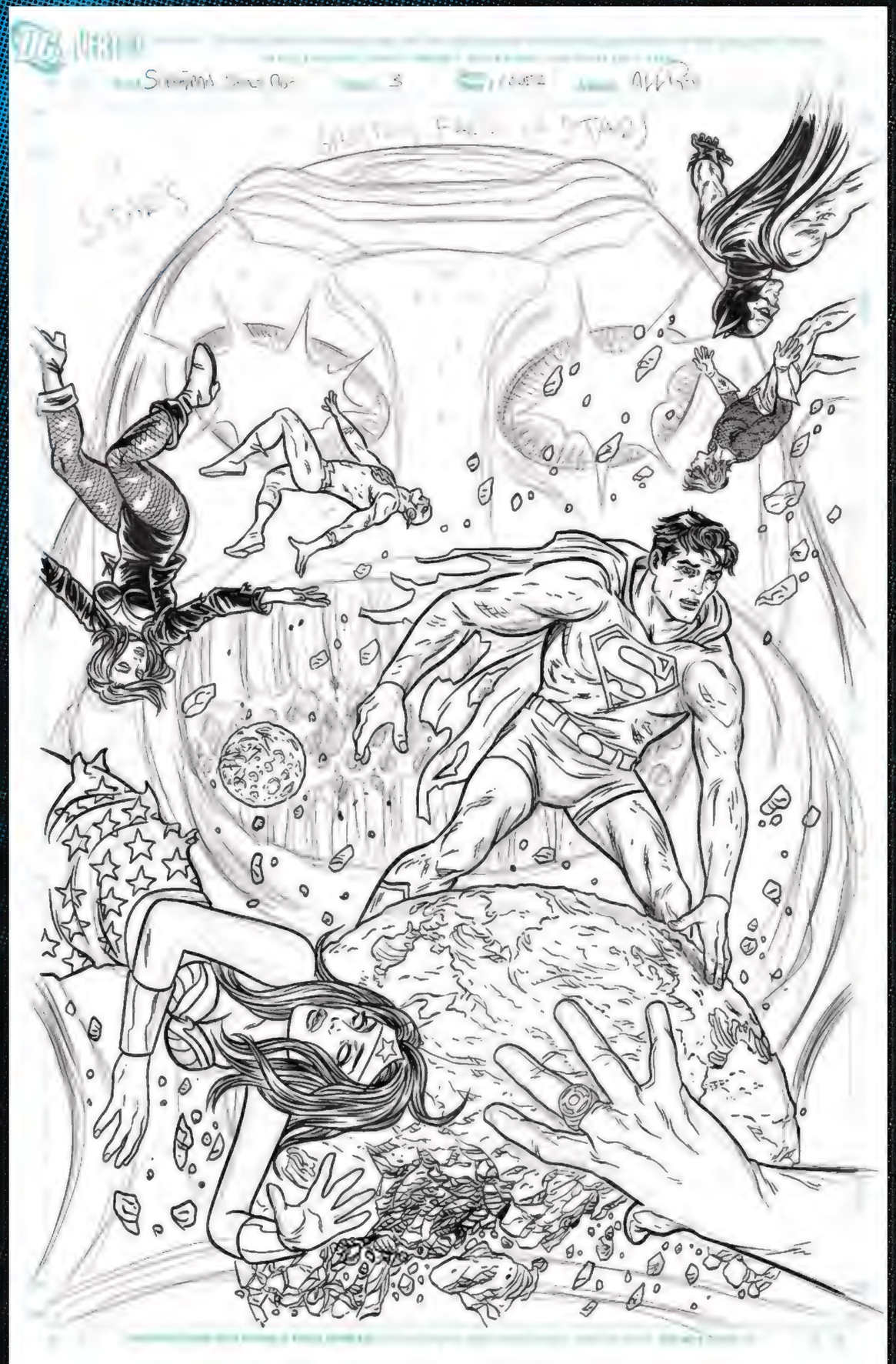

Superman: Space Age #3 cover inks by **MICHAEL ALLRED**

Superman study by **MICHAEL ALLRED**

Action Comics #1050 variant cover by **MICHAEL ALLRED** and **LAURA ALLRED**

"It is Superman as he should be presented—as a symbol of hope."

GEORGE GENE GUSTINES, *New York Times*

IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD AS HE KNOWS IT!

Meet Clark Kent, a young reporter who just learned the world will soon come to an end, and there's nothing he can do to save it. Sounds like a job for his alter ego...Superman! After years of standing idle, the young man from Krypton defies the wishes of his fathers to come out to the world as the first superhero of the Space Age. As each decade passes and new dangers emerge, he wonders whether *this* will be the one to kill him and everyone he loves. Superman realizes even good intentions are not without their backlash as the world transforms into a place as determined to destroy itself as he is to save it.

From Eisner Award-winning comics creators **MARK RUSSELL** (*Not All Robots; Exit Stage Left: The Snagglepuss Chronicles*) and **MICHAEL ALLRED** (*Bowie: Stardust, Rayguns & Moonage Daydreams; iZOMBIE*), this highly anticipated title collects *Superman: Space Age* #1-3.

SON OF ULTRON

"THIS FAN... THIS MONSTER!"